20 March 2023

Health Finance & Policy Committee

MN House of Representatives

100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairperson Liebling and Members of the Committee:

This letter is written in support of HF346 which would provide bridge funding until such time as the Medicaid rate study is completed and rates for mental health services increased to reflect current economic realities.

Change Inc. provides school-based mental health services in 30+ schools in the metro area. While we are supported in this work by a DHS School-Linked Mental Health grant and school district contracts, approximately two thirds of the funding to support a 1.0fte therapist in a school is budgeted to come from third party reimbursement. As Medicaid rates have remained stagnant for many years and other costs related to recruiting and retaining mental health professionals has increased, it has become more and more challenging to break even.

With increased Medicaid rates – and bridge funding until the rates are increased - we would be able to expand school-based mental health services for children and youth. Given the pandemic and other community crises that have impacted the well-being of young people and caregivers, the needs are greater than ever…particularly in schools.

Please give your utmost consideration to supporting HF346.

Sincerely,

Jody Nelson, Ed.D., LMFT

Executive Director

612.581.9811 cell

jnelson@thechangeinc.org