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KENTE CIRCLE TRAINING INSTITUTE

February 17, 2021

Dear Chair Fischer and members of the Behavioral Health Policy Division:

I am writing to request your support for sustaining and growing our mental health workforce HF 970.

At Kente Circle and Kente Circle Training Institute it is our goal and missions to serve communities of color. It is our desire to tap into the community's individual and collective genius to support and propel them in the direction of success and healthy living. We do this through our therapy and training services. Unfortunately we are falling short of being able to respond to the communities needs because there isn't enough providers and supervisors of color.

There is a shortage of mental health professionals of colors throughout the state of Minnesota but its in Minneapolis and St.Paul where I am witnessing this disparity first hand. Additionally, we need a workforce that is more culturally competent with adequate tools to provide services cross-culturally with whomever they are call to serve.

You may not be aware but there are many barriers that impede the communities ability to increase and sustain an adequate number of Mental Health professionals and licensed drug & alcohol counselors (LADC). Among them are the raising cost of education and training, lack of qualified supervisors, inequities in pay for professionals and practitioners among others. Furthermore, we must find away to retain our current Mental Health workforce and equip them to become more culturally informed and responsive to the evolving diverse needs of our Minnesota family. These challenges make it unappealing, unaffordable and virtually impossible for the right people to do this work.

This bill provides a comprehensive array of strategies that address building a more informed, competent mental health workforce in our state. On behalf of my team and the communities we serve I strongly support the efforts outlined in this bill and urge your support to invest in strengthening our mental health system for all Minnesotans by investing in our workforce

Best Regard,



Larry G. Tucker, LMFT
CEO/Owner of Kente Circle, llc
President/CEO of Kente Circle Training Institute,501c3