



# PrairieCare

February 20, 2022

Representative Tina Liebling, Chair  
Committee on Health Finance and Policy  
477 State Office Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Chair Liebling,

I am writing in support of H.F. 3470, legislation which authorizes Children's Minnesota to establish 22 licensed psychiatric inpatient beds for youth in St. Paul. Children's Minnesota is one of the regions premier providers of subspecialty care for youth across our state. We routinely collaborate with Children's MN in providing care for thousands of youths with psychiatric care needs, often those with acute and/or medically complex needs. Their dedication to quality care and meeting the needs of all youth is admirable, and their efforts to establish enhanced capacity for youth psychiatric care is much needed. Children's MN has already demonstrated a commitment to increasing access to psychiatric care by establishing community-based partial hospital programs. They are also uniquely positioned to help with early identification and the proactive care of psychiatric conditions through robust integrated behavioral health services.

PrairieCare is Minnesota's largest psychiatric health system for youth in the state, yet we lack adequate capacity for youth in need of acute psychiatric care. We care for all youth across the state, regardless of insurance type, and are amidst our own expansion of inpatient services, increasing from 71 to 101 beds by the Fall of 2023. Our hospital and partial hospital programs operate at near-capacity most of the school year. Many youths board in emergency rooms for days, and sometimes weeks before availability of a psychiatric inpatient bed becomes available. Each year we accommodate hundreds of transfers from other metro hospitals, and still do not have capacity to meet all their needs in a timely manner. We welcome Children's MN into this area of acute specialty care and will help to support their system through enhanced communication and collaboration regarding the psychiatric needs of individuals and our communities. To help ensure sustainability of these critical services, we also urge the State to increase funding for Medicaid coverage and eliminate the DRG payment method for psychiatric inpatient care that results in significant underpayment.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important matter. PrairieCare will continue to support the advancement of a high quality and accessible continuum of psychiatric care for our youth.

Sincerely,

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Chief Executive Officer  
PrairieCare & PrairieCare Medical Group

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