

April 9, 2026

Senator Melissa Wiklund, Chair  
Senate Health and Human Services Committee  
95 University Avenue W.  
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 2107  
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: S.F. 8

Dear Chair Wiklund and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

We write to express our strong **support for the Collaborative Care Model (CoCM) (S.F. 8)**. As stakeholders representing healthcare providers, patients, and advocates across Minnesota, we believe that making CoCM a Medicaid-covered benefit is a critical, evidence-based step toward addressing our state's growing mental health and substance use crisis.

Minnesota faces critical gaps in access to behavioral health care. **Over one-third** of adults in our state report symptoms of anxiety or depression, and **80%** of counties are designated mental health professional shortage areas. Remarkably, only about **25%** of people receive effective mental health care, including in primary care settings, where the majority of treatment occurs. The Collaborative Care Model meets this challenge head-on by integrating behavioral health professionals directly into primary care teams, dramatically improving outcomes and access.

CoCM is already reimbursed by Medicare and most commercial insurers and is covered under Medicaid in 38 states. It is time for Minnesota to catch up. This legislation would ensure sustainable provider payments aligned with Medicare rates and support clinic startup and training.

More than 90 studies have demonstrated that CoCM delivers faster, more sustainable mental health care and saves \$6.50 for every \$1 invested. With a track record of improving care coordination, reducing healthcare costs, and addressing barriers to accessing psychiatric care, CoCM aligns directly with Medicaid's mission and Minnesota's values.

We respectfully urge you to support this proposal and make Minnesota the 39th state to reimburse CoCM under Medicaid. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to improving behavioral health access for Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

