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Agency/Point of Contact: Neerja Singh - Department of Human Services

Title of Request: Mental Health Support for Children experiencing crisis

Date: 6/21/2022 **Request Amount:** \$ 2,500,000

Expenditure Time Period: 7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023

Brief Summary of Request: (Summary must be complete on this page with supporting information attached)

The health-care system across the State is experiencing significant disruption in terms of providing timely services to children and youth with complex mental health needs. Hospitals are overwhelmed especially when they have to keep the children who do not need the hospital level of care but have no options available for lower level of care.

A recent report done by Kare 11 (May 16, 2022) on M Health Fairview hospital indicated that more than two-thirds of the children arriving at the hospital who did not need medical care were under the care of counties or group home. The report indicates that since September of 2021, the hospital has seen over 145 patients in that group, with each spending an average of 15 days (the longest being 97 days). With the pandemic and racial inequities, children with complex mental health needs have experienced significant disruptions in their support systems, leading to challenges never imagined before. Children experiencing complex mental health crises during COVID are uniquely impacted as they experienced this crisis during sensitive periods of their physical, social and psychological development. DHS data warehouse numbers indicate that in 2021 there were 6,762 individuals under the age of 18 treated for mental health emergencies.

Children's Residential Facilities(CRFs) in the State can be a viable source of treatment for these children but a lot of providers are forced to reduce their capacity due to COVID related factors, including but not limited to staff turnover, workforce shortages, and underpayment of front line staff. In addition, providers and families are overwhelmed with the complexities of the mental health needs children are manifesting at this time leading to the need for specialized training, higher reimbursement and specialized care models. Over the course of last 3 years more than 5 residential facilities for children in Minnesota have closed their operations, but the need continues to grow. A survey conducted by DHS with hospital administrators across the State in May 2022, cited lack of lower level of mental health placement options in more than 80% of the cases when hospitals are unable to discharge children from emergency departments.

Based on our consultations with stakeholders, our request is as follows:
\$2.5 million in one-time grant funding for Children Residential Facility (CRF) Providers to provide care to children with complex needs. This funds providers who are willing and demonstrate the ability to meet the needs of the children and youth including but not limited to moving children from hospital level of care. DHS will develop the criterion for issuance of these grants and track the number of children who will be supported through this grant along with the outcomes. The expenditure time period will start July 1, 2022.

Jodi Harpstead Digitally signed by Jodi Harpstead
Date: 2022.06.24 11:29:39 -05'00'
Department Head Signature

6/24/2022
Date