



Improving lives for adults living with mental illnesses as well as maintaining the viability of providers through one voice for quality adult mental health services.

*August 23, 2021*

*To: Members of the MN Frontline Worker Pay Working Group*

*From: The Mental Health Providers Association of Minnesota*

*Re: The Frontline Work of Community Based Mental Health Residential Services Staff*

Members of the MN Frontline Worker Pay Working Group,

We are submitting this written testimony on behalf of the Mental Health Providers Association of Minnesota (MHPAM). MHPAM is a non-profit association of for-profit and non-profit mental health service providers in the state of Minnesota. Our member organizations provide a variety of critical mental health services for adults throughout Minnesota such as: Intensive Residential Treatment Services (IRTS), Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS), Crisis Residential Stabilization Services, Targeted Case Management, and many others. The mission of our association is “Improving lives for adults living with a mental illness as well as maintaining the viability of providers through one voice for quality adult mental health services.”

We have been following the work of the MN Frontline Worker Pay Working Group, and we are aware of the difficult task you face in your legislative charge to form recommendations for eligibility guidelines around the disbursement of financial support to frontline workers. We thank you for your service on this working group, and we thank the many, many Minnesotans across a broad spectrum of employment settings who stepped up to bravely carry on their essential and in-person frontline roles during COVID (and are continuing to do so today).

**We are asking that in your current deliberations you consider the employees working in community based residential mental health services, who throughout the pandemic have continued providing critical in-person residential mental health services and supports to Minnesotans living with a mental illness.** Individuals who are served by community based residential mental health treatment programs across Minnesota are often living with a serious mental illness. They come to our community based residential mental health treatment programs when they are experiencing an acute phase of mental health issues and need an intensive level of services and supports while they work to stabilize their mental health. These very real mental health needs of Minnesotans have not receded during COVID and our critical staff - most of whom are paid comparatively low wages – have showed up to work day after day in the face of COVID exposure risk to continue to deliver high quality mental health services.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if there is any further information we could provide that would be helpful in your deliberations and thank you for your thoughtful consideration of mental health residential services staff and for your service on this working group.

Sincerely,

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