

# CHANGE INC.

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12 February 2022

To: Mental Health Legislative Network  
Re: Children's Mental Health Press Conference on February 15, 2022

Please consider this document a press statement from Change Inc. in support of the Mental Health Legislative Network' efforts to raise legislative awareness of the increased mental health needs of children and families and the fragility of our mental health system given the impacts of the pandemic and other community crises.

Change Inc. utilizes the power of relationships and community to create educational, training and healing opportunities for children, youth, young adults and families so that they can achieve their highest ambition. In the area of children's mental health, Change Inc. provides school-based mental health services in 30 schools in the Twin Cities.

As we approach the end of the second year of community disruption due to COVID-19 and other crises, we have grave concerns about the impacts to the mental health and general development of children and youth. Additionally, we are seeing and experiencing the stress and trauma impacting families and all adults who care about kids (teachers, therapists, mentors, school support staff.) The culture and climate of area schools has been negatively impacted by all of the disruption, uncertainty, community violence and trauma....all the humans are exhausted.

I have often heard it said that "last year was easy compared to this year." The first year of the pandemic was met with heroic responses in the human services field – it was "all hands on deck" to stand up distance learning and telehealth, to meet the basic needs of kids and families. We ran on adrenalin.

Year two finds us limping along...schools are screaming for more mental health supports, workforce shortage in the mental health arena is very real, and clinicians working in schools and in communities are leaving for private practice to escape the pressures of making billable goals in chaotic settings.



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