

Dear Sirs and Madams,

I'm writing as a primary care pediatrician to ask you to support covering the gaps in funding for primary health care for 2026.

Our patients benefit tremendously from the mental health and DULCE services. Our teenagers need mental health support to attend school, graduate, and become functioning community members. Our parents need the DULCE support to help them navigate the struggles of finding daycare openings, supporting new parent mental health challenges, and raising infants in such a way that best supports their development.

Our practice needs the funds to cover the rising costs of practicing healthcare. We do not have the funding to pay our staff at the level that they deserve. Retaining staff so that the practice can stay open is critical.

Our providers need to make a reasonable wage. As a pediatrician, I make roughly what a teacher makes after accounting for the cost of respective healthcare premiums. My yearly health insurance deductible is \$18,000 which is always in the back of my mind. Last year I avoided my own healthcare needs because I couldn't afford it. The irony of not being paid enough to take care of my own health is demoralizing.

If we burn out our primary care physicians or primary care office needs to limit access, it will only increase the cost of care.

I love the families that I serve. But we need a sound financial way forward to providing care.

Sincerely,
Dr. Karin Gray