

# WAFCA 2023-25 State Budget Request

## *Prevention & Early Intervention Programs*

WAFCA is a membership association comprised of for profit and nonprofit behavioral health and human services agencies. Our members provide services ranging from prevention to residential treatment, across the lifespan, and throughout the state. The depth and breadth of services delivered gives us a unique perspective - one that allows us to see where struggles have taken root and identify targeted solutions. ***It is from this vantage point that we recommend inclusion of key prevention and early intervention programs in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget.***

### Sustainable School-Based Mental Health

*Long-term sustainability of equitable access to school mental health services for all students depends upon a permanent, continual commitment of state resources.*

The bipartisan support for school mental health grants over the past three legislative sessions has been critical to lay the foundation for school mental health. More than half of Wisconsin school districts have received funding through the grant program; however, the current grants are capped at \$75,000 per district, which limits the impact of these grants on more populous school districts and smaller school districts can lack the administrative capacity to compete for these dollars. We know that **school mental health works best when a student referred for individual therapy is able to access it quickly and conveniently at school.** Providing more sustainable funding for school-based mental health services and requiring changes to insurance coverage will result in more equitable access to services in Wisconsin.

### *What We Need to Evolve School-Based Mental Health*



**Replace the current grant program with sustainable aid to EVERY district.**

Providing aid for school mental health to each district rather than a grant program would enable schools to build on the foundational community collaborations they have developed and provide for sustainable mental health programs and services in every district across the state. Providing funding through schools ensures that we reach all students and enables schools to work with families and the community to identify key partners.



**Require insurance companies to cover school-based mental health services and therapists in-training.**

Across the board, schools identify **lack of sufficient insurance coverage** as a barrier to students accessing mental health services in schools. **Barriers include high deductibles, prior authorizations, and restricted networks** that fail to include sufficient mental health providers. Insurance networks that don't recognize therapists in-training keep students from accessing services offered at their school location.