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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Questions, please contact:

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Caption: Elissa Hansen of Northspan Group, Inc. describes the process for gathering community ideas to improve mental and behavioral healthcare.

Mental and Behavioral Healthcare Needs in Hibbing Wilderness Health Hosts Community Listening Sessions

Hibbing, Minn. - Mental and behavioral health needs remain a challenge throughout the state of Minnesota, and the unique needs of rural Minnesotans require targeted attention. To learn more about the needs of residents of Northern St. Louis County, Wilderness Health invited community members to share their stories and help shape the future of mental health care. The listening session was held on Tuesday,

July 23rd at The Androy by Boomtown in Hibbing. This was the fourth event in a series being held across Northeastern Minnesota.

Attendees shared stories of the ongoing challenges of navigating mental and behavioral healthcare. The group expressed the need to address workforce, stigma, insurance coverage and improve communication. Community members identified long wait lists for service as a significant problem and wondered about solutions to support people in the interim. The group suggested that regional navigators could help coordinate services and improve communication about care to better support patients and families.

According to Alexis Sininger, Program Associate and coordinator of the new project around mental and behavioral health care navigation, “With the help of our community members and the experiences and ideas they have shared I am confident we will identify a path towards easier access to care. Mental and behavioral health are topics that can be tough to discuss. We are appreciative of the attendees’ willingness to be open and honest about their experiences. It is my belief that change starts with communities who care, and it is clear to me that our communities care a lot.”


For Hibbing and surrounding area residents who missed the listening session, Wilderness is collecting feedback directly. Please email your thoughts to info@wildernesshealthmn.org or call Zomi Bloom, Telehealth Program Manager, at 218-834-7323.

Local Graphic Recorder Nelle Rhicard will compile feedback across the region into pictures that tell the story of community needs and hopes. The listening session was facilitated in partnership with Northspan Group, Inc.

Impact of the Listening Sessions on the Future of Care

Through funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration’s Rural Health Network Development Program, Wilderness Health and rural Northeastern Minnesota communities will identify successes, barriers, and possible solutions. For questions about the regional listening sessions please reach out to Zomi Bloom at 218-834-7323 or zomi.bloom@wildernesshealthmn.org.

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	<p><i>About Wilderness Health-</i> a non-profit collaborative of independent providers working together to improve rural health care in Northeastern Minnesota and Wisconsin. Headquartered in Two Harbors since 2013, Wilderness Health aims to create a unified and supportive network for its members through its</p>
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core values of collaboration, independence, networking, and quality. For more information about Wilderness, visit <https://wildernesshealthmn.org/>.

Wilderness Health Members:

Bigfork Valley Hospital

Community Memorial Hospital

Cook Hospital

Ely-Bloomenson Community Hospital

Fairview Range / Range Regional Health Services

Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital

Aspirus Lake View

North Shore Health

Aspirus St. Luke's