

May 7, 2025

Representative Robert Bierman
Co-Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee
5th Floor, Centennial Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Representative Jeff Backer
Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee
2nd Floor, Centennial Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Co-Chair Bierman and Co-Chair Backer,

I am writing to express my great opposition to the \$1 million cut to the Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRHS) grant in HF2435, the Health budget bill. The Minneapolis Health Department's School Based Clinics have been a recipient of this grant since January 2024 and the funding is critical to ensure our clients have access to family planning services like contraceptives counseling, screening and testing for sexually transmitted infections, and referrals for other medical or mental health care regardless of their insurance status.

Funding for family planning, through the SRHS grant, saves taxpayer money by decreasing teen and unwanted pregnancy rates and reducing the rates of STI, HIV, and cervical cancer. This is equivalent to an estimated taxpayer savings of \$7 for every public dollar spent.

The Minneapolis School Based Clinics (SBCs) model is designed to address many of the health barriers and disparities experienced by the population of young people we serve and reduce stigma to accessing sexual and reproductive health services. All students who attend a Minneapolis high school with a school based clinic can access fully confidential care for their sexual and reproductive health needs, regardless of insurance coverage and immigration status. We eliminate transportation barriers by being located within their high school setting.

In 2024 our four school based clinics funded with the SRHS grant provided over 500 students with 4,600 clinic visits for counseling, screening and methods. In addition we conducted 300 outreach events including classroom presentations reaching over 4,600 participants. The SBCs maintain a critical health care safety net for adolescents.

Minnesota is fortunate to have many high-quality community clinics that serve underserved populations because of the SRHS grant. Cutting the funding to this grant program does a disservice to Minnesotans who rely on our clinic and clinics like ours across the state to receive care. Please do not support cutting this grant.

Sincerely,

Heidi Ritchie

Heidi Ritchie
Deputy Commissioner of Health
City of Minneapolis