



Rep. Joe Schomacker & Rep. Robert Bierman

Health Finance & Policy Committee

HF1978 / SF2117: Medical Assistance Coverage for Traditional Health Care Practices

Wednesday, March 29, 2025

Dear Co-Chairs Schomacker, Bierman, & members of the Health Finance & Policy Committee,

The Birth Justice Collaborative requests your support of HF1878, to instruct Minnesota's Department of Human Services to apply for a waiver that would allow for Medicaid to cover traditional health care practices received through American Indian health service facilities. Expanding Medicaid coverage to traditional health care practices is a holistic strategy to address health disparities in the American Indian community, improve access to culturally appropriate care, and to bridge the gap between indigenous traditional healing practices and the institutionalized health care model.

Studies from the National Indian Health Board and National Council of Urban Indian Health demonstrate that **incorporating traditional health care practices with institutional medical billing practices improves health outcomes in the American Indian community.**<sup>1</sup> Traditional healing practices take a holistic approach to addressing the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of their community and often include sweat lodge ceremonies, traditional food intervention, talking circles, smudging, and substance use recovery programs.

Please support HF1878, to allow Tribal organizations and urban Indian organizations to offer health care services and ceremonies that reflect centuries of traditional healing practices, and improve health outcomes, address disparities, and better serve American Indian children and families in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

**The Birth Justice Collaborative**

Akhmiri Sekhr-Ra, Cultural Wellness Center,

Louise Matson, Division of Indian Work,

Rev. Dr. Alika Galloway, Liberty Northside Healing Space,

Ruth Buffalo, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center,

Dr. Antony Stately, Native American Community Clinic,

Makeda Zulu, Urban Research & Outreach-Engagement Center, University of Minnesota

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<sup>1</sup> National Council of Urban Indian Health. Fall 2023. "[Recent Trends in Third-Party Billing: Analysis of Traditional Healing Programs at Urban Indian Organizations and Health Outcomes.](#)"