

# Protect Minnesota's trauma care and safety-net hospital system: Repurpose the ballpark sales tax

Recent changes to Medicare and Medicaid programs — combined with growing levels of uncompensated care — put Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) and the broader Hennepin Healthcare system at significant risk of closure, jeopardizing access to care for Minnesotans statewide.

Legislative action is needed to stabilize Hennepin's essential health care system. Lawmakers must protect the future of critical regional and statewide health care services by repurposing the ballpark sales tax in the 2026 session.

## Minnesotans across the state rely on Hennepin's health care system

Health facilities in Hennepin County provide essential care to residents of the metro region and the state of Minnesota:

- Minnesota's busiest emergency department and Level 1 trauma center for adults and pediatrics, caring for patients in over 100,000 visits annually.
- The state's cornerstone safety-net hospital serving low-income, uninsured, and vulnerable populations.
- An essential teaching hospital training physicians who practice across Minnesota.
- A medical examiner facility serving Hennepin, Scott, and Dakota counties.
- NorthPoint Health and Wellness, a multi-specialty medical, dental, and mental health center in North Minneapolis.



## The future of this essential health care system is now at risk

Hennepin Healthcare System faces severe, immediate fiscal cliff as a result of recent federal cuts and growth of uncompensated care. The system now faces potential closure, at tremendous risk to Minnesotans across the state and the statewide health system. HHS faces:

- \$50 million shortfall now just to keep doors open
- \$100 million annually in uncompensated care losses
- \$1.7 billion in federal cuts over the next decade

## Lawmakers can protect Minnesotans by repurposing the Ballpark Sales Tax

The Ballpark Sales Tax was established in 2005 to build Target Field. Because of strong financial stewardship, the stadium bonds will be paid off more than a decade early. This creates a once-in-a-generation opportunity: refocus the existing Ballpark Sales Tax as a Healthcare Sales Tax and provide a sustainable funding source to protect Minnesota's most critical safety-net healthcare system.

## Our state's healthcare system cannot absorb this loss

Lawmakers must act now to protect against the loss of a healthcare system that is essential to the entire state of Minnesota.

- Patients from across the state receive care in Hennepin County that is uncompensated
- Rural hospitals rely on Hennepin Healthcare for specialty care — including burn, trauma, transplant.
- If Hennepin Healthcare is forced to close, rural hospitals will face unmanageable growth in patient loads.
- The lives of Minnesotans are at stake — from the injured farmer in southern Minnesota to the child in northern Minnesota needing trauma care. These services are irreplaceable.

- Minnesota cannot afford to lose a Level I trauma center that serves the entire state.

### A repurposed ballpark sales tax would:

- Extend the existing 0.15% sales tax to a 1 cent sales tax.
- Dedicate more than 90% of revenues to support health facilities and healthcare services provided through Hennepin County, including approximately \$320 million annually for healthcare facilities and services.
- Ensure continued operation of Hennepin County's Level I trauma center and the regional safety-net system.
- Ongoing support Target Field and public infrastructure.
- Continue existing support for youth activities and extended Hennepin County Library hours.

## The time to act is now

Lawmakers can and must act now to preserve essential services by repurposing ballpark sales tax. Supporting this measure is not just a fiscal choice — it is a moral imperative.

Together, we can protect Minnesota's health care future.

Tour Hennepin Healthcare's campus or ride along with Hennepin EMS to see life-saving care in action. Contact **Susie Emmert** ([susie.emmert@hcmcd.org](mailto:susie.emmert@hcmcd.org)) or **Jessica Oaxaca** ([jessica.oaxaca@hcmcd.org](mailto:jessica.oaxaca@hcmcd.org)) to schedule.

Liz Young  
Director, Intergovernmental Relations

Cell: 612-559-0447  
[liz.young@hennepin.us](mailto:liz.young@hennepin.us)

Brennan Furness  
Public Policy Manager

Cell: 612-235-0938  
[brennan.furness@hennepin.us](mailto:brennan.furness@hennepin.us)



# STATEWIDE ASSET

**Hennepin Healthcare System (HHS)** is a Level I adult and pediatric trauma center, a teaching hospital, and the largest Medicaid provider system in Minnesota. Minnesota depends on us to care for them when they need it and to train the future healthcare workforce.

Many of our patients face significant barriers that result in detrimental health outcomes. We primarily, and proudly, serve communities of color and low-income adult and pediatric populations experiencing social and medical complexities such as chronic health conditions, unstable housing, transportation, food insecurity, and language barriers.

## 75%

**Our health system serves over 75% of patients who are publicly insured or uninsured.** We take care of Minnesotans regardless of their ability to pay or where they come from.

## #1

**Our expertise in Trauma and Burn wounds are the #1 reason** patients outside of Hennepin County residents utilize Hennepin Healthcare.



## 40%

**Between 2020 and 2024 40% of patients** needing trauma or burn specialty care were from outside Hennepin County.

## 29%

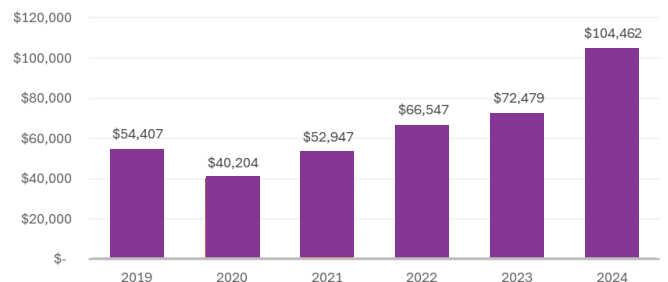
**29% or ~1/3 of all our patients,** systemwide, are from outside of Hennepin County.

## Factors that impact our services

Varying factors like **lack of adequate reimbursement, increased staffing costs, and inflation** place detrimental financial strains on our health system. HHS averages **~5 days cash on hand**. We have strived to reduce losses but with narrow margins we are one unexpected challenge away from significant disruption of services, and our ability to serve Minnesotans.

In 2024 our **uncompensated care** (costs absorbed by Hennepin Healthcare annually for unpaid care provided to patients) total was **\$104M**, of that, **\$24M** was for care provided to patients outside of Hennepin County.

Costs of Uncompensated Care - per Audited Financials



\*amounts are in the 000s; e.g. 2024 data = \$104,462,000

\*Uncompensated Care represents the total of Charity Care and Bad Debt write-offs. Unpaid deductible & co-pays contribute to the uncompensated care.

We also estimate impacts from policy changes at the federal level, including H.R. 1, will compound the financial strains we already face with an approximate \$1.7B in losses over the next ten years.

## Training Minnesota's future workforce

Our Hennepin Assault Response Team (HART) took care of **1,262 patients from 32 counties across MN in 2025**. Our program provides technical assistance to forensic nursing programs across the state and serve as a vital resource for sustaining forensic nursing capacity in rural communities where maintaining 24/7 Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) coverage presents unique workforce challenges.

# 22

accredited residency  
and fellowship programs

As an academic medical center, we pair research and innovation to prepare and diversify of the future healthcare workforce in Minnesota. HHS serves as a training site for **31% of all Graduate Medical Education trainees** and **60% of Undergraduate Medical Education trainees** in Minnesota.

# 346

graduates chose to stay  
in MN to practice

In academic year 2024- 2025, **43% of learners** that trained at Hennepin Healthcare were trainees of color and **71% of all learners** stayed in MN.

In the last 10 years, 346 graduates chose to stay in MN to practice, of those 64 indicated they were moving to rural practice in MN. Of those 64, 11 were surgeons, 11 internal medicine, 10 family medicine, and 6 Critical Care.

# 1 of 1

in Minnesota

We are **home to the only Addiction Medicine Fellowship program in Minnesota** (Sponsored by the University of Minnesota). Graduates of this program have gone on to serve communities across the state including Native American reservations, Duluth, for the East African community and many other sites, yet **most counties still do not have even one addiction trained doctor**.

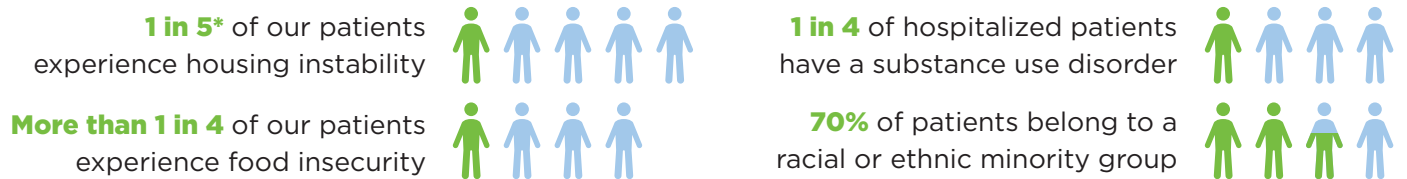
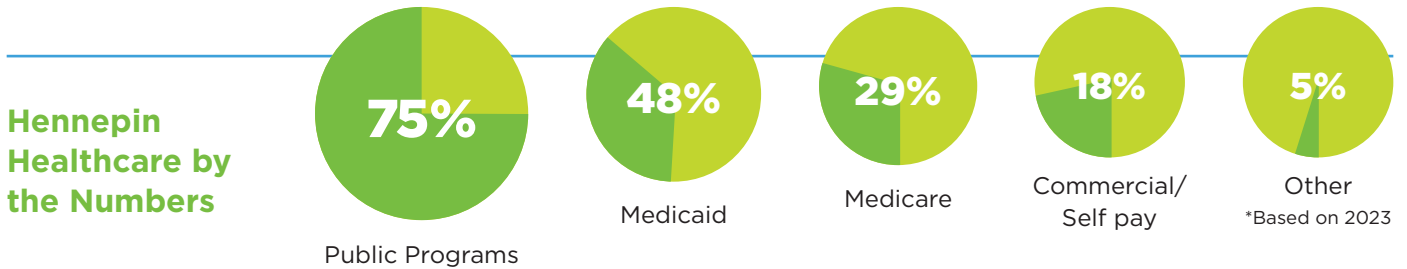
Our tele-mentoring program, Project ECHO expands access to quality care across the state and has the most ECHO programming and highest participant count in the state, including **reaching 51 counties across the state**.




Our Interdisciplinary Simulation and Education Center uses state-of-the-art procedural technology to support hands-on, interactive training.

**Susie Emmert | Hennepin Healthcare System | 651-278-5422 | susie.emmert@hcmcd.org**  
**Jessica Oaxaca | Hennepin Healthcare System | 507-828-8604 | jessica.oaxaca@hcmcd.org**

# MINNESOTA'S SAFETY NET HOSPITAL


Hennepin Healthcare System is Minnesota's largest Medicaid provider system and safety-net level I trauma hospital. We have primary care clinics located across Hennepin County and serve the most complex patient population from across the entire state. Healthy communities are thriving communities and we strive to deliver exceptional, equitable healthcare without exception.



-  **\$104M** Uncompensated care
-  **\$13.8M** provided in free medications using 340B program savings
-  **OVER 400** patients a day seen in our Addiction Medicine clinic

**One of the few safety net hospitals nationally\*** with a dental program serving the community, with patients from:

- 65** different counties in MN
- 17.4%** of our patients have Developmental Disabilities and/or Autism

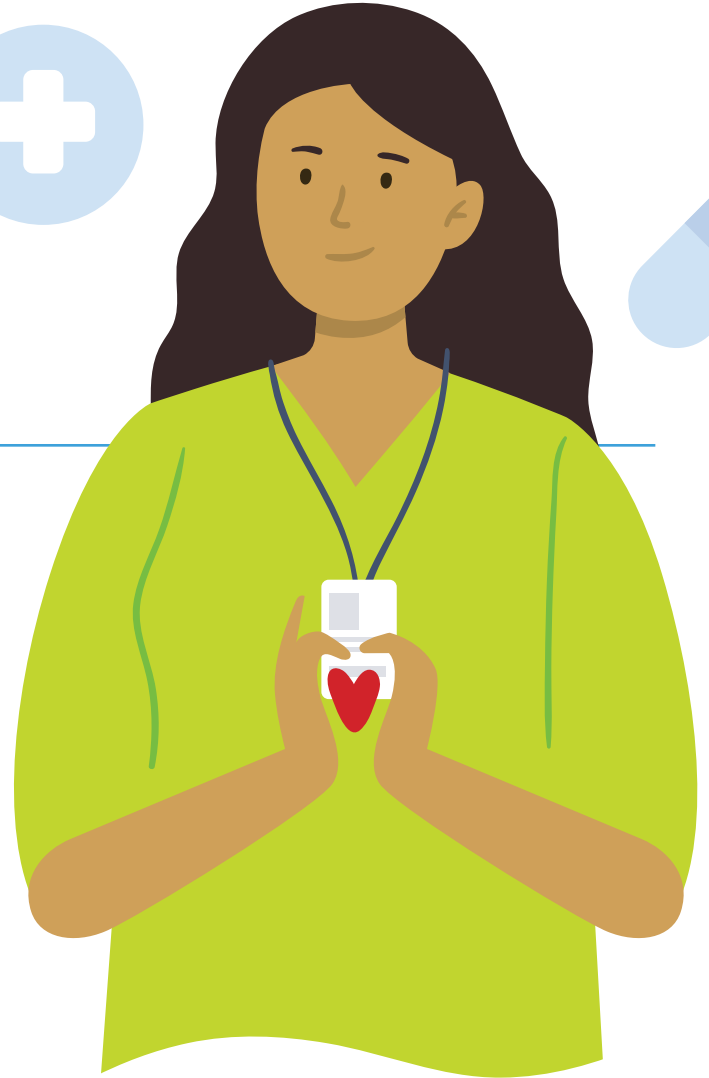



### Patient-Centered Care

Many of our patients face significant barriers that result in detrimental health impacts and outcomes. We primarily, and proudly, serve communities of color and low-income adult and pediatric populations experiencing social and medical complexities such as chronic health conditions, unstable housing, transportation, food insecurity, and language barriers.

## We invest in the health of our community and lower health care costs by providing

- Culturally responsive and trauma-informed care strategies
- Food and transportation support
- A Coordinated Care Clinic for high utilizers of Emergency Department care
- Medication Therapy Management
- A Pediatric and Postpartum Mobile Health Clinic
- Health equity programs
- Spiritual care
- Interpreter services support in 19 languages



## Workforce and Innovation

As an academic medical center, we pair research and innovation to prepare and diversify the future healthcare workforce.

- Home to **the only Addiction Medicine Fellowship program in Minnesota** (Sponsored by the University of Minnesota).
- Our telementoring program, Project ECHO expands access to quality care across the state and has **the most ECHO programming and highest participant count in the state**, including reaching 51 counties across the state.
- Our Talent Garden program **hosts the only 'Youth with Stethoscopes' hands-on learning events in the state** to introduce BIPOC youth to healthcare jobs. Since 2021, over 1,000 youth have participated.

## In academic year 2024- 2025

# 277 TOTAL

residents and  
fellows sponsored



## 22

accredited  
residencies and  
fellowships



## 118

of those were  
trainees of color



## 71%

of our learners  
stayed in Minnesota