

# Options | EAST

A PREGNANCY MEDICAL CLINIC

May 2, 2023

Dear Members of the Health Conference Committee:

My name is Jennifer Meyer, I am the Executive Director of Options for Women East, which is a pregnancy medical clinic located on the eastside of Saint Paul that has been serving women for 33 years.

I am requesting that you keep the Positive Alternatives Grant program in the state budget for 2023-2025. This grant has allowed our clinic to provide much need prenatal services to the women and families on the Eastside.

Did you know that if you do not have insurance when you find out you are pregnant, it can be difficult to find a clinic to provide prenatal care for your pregnancy? Options for Women east sees women who lack insurance or who are underinsured and provide full prenatal care for them at no cost. Without prenatal care, these women would continue their pregnancy without seeing a doctor, without having necessary testing and labs, without ultrasounds, without mental health screenings, without lactation services, without home visits, and without the support of a trained and licensed medical team that will support them through their entire pregnancy journey. This is a public health crisis.

I want to take a moment and share with you a testimony from one of our patients, Rachel, who benefited from these important services:

*“My name is Rachel, and I am a patient of Options for Women East pregnancy medical clinic in Saint Paul. Through their prenatal program I have had two successful pregnancies, deliveries, and post-partum care. Today I have 3 beautiful healthy children whom I raise as a single parent, and the 2 youngest boys are here because of the medical team at Options for Women East.*

*The greatest gift my family has received and continues to keep, is healthcare. When I first came to Options for Women East, I did not have medical insurance. This was a barrier to me receiving medical services.*

*Options East was able to still give me medical care even without insurance. The staff welcomed me into their prenatal program. Through that, and other services they provided, I received medical care, doctor and nurse visits, ultrasounds, pregnancy and parenting education, baby supplies, community resources, and made relationships with the staff that continue today. This helped my family greatly in times of major need. The staff also worked with me to apply for insurance so I could continue to provide for my growing family.*

*I was blessed to have doctors who cared about me and my baby as whole people. But the care and compassion they offer goes beyond their medical services. They help foster relationships that are so needed during a pregnancy and after delivery.*

*Without positive alternative grant funding, they would NOT be able to offer critical prenatal care for women like me!*

*And without Options for Women East, I would not have been able to take care of my baby's immediate needs like clothes, diapers, wipes, bottles and breast-feeding supplies, car seat, stroller, and pack n play with safe sleep education.*

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*Today I am still connected with that doctor and continue to receive care for my entire family and keep my insurance.*

*As a single black mother raising my babies on my own, places like this are extremely needed in my community. I know I am not alone in the situation of working and trying to keep everything together for my family."*

Rachel is just one of the many women who have benefited from our services. To date we have had over 250 women enter our prenatal program and over 120 babies have been delivered thanks in part to the funds from this grant.

We offer medically accurate information on all pregnancy options, but our scope of services is to fill a void that no one else is filling. Providing care for those women and families who are un-insured and make the choice to continue with their pregnancy.

I urge you to continue to support the Positive Alternatives Grant program.

Thank you for your time.



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