



Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc.

SMOC Family Planning

909 4th Avenue
Worthington, MN 56187

Telephone: 800-658

Fax: 507-372

TTY: 507-372

“Strengthening our communities through opportunities and service”

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
Co-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. SMOC Family Planning has been a recipient of this grant since 2009 and this funding is critical to ensure our patients 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.

As a result of the SRHS funding, SMOC Family Planning has been able to offer several additional services, including:

- Increase our outreach event participation during 2024, attending 33 events, reaching over 1,000 persons. This includes STI testing events at our 7 rural colleges. We again, have several STI testing events scheduled for 2025.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER



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- We were able to provide counseling services to over 590 people, making over 150 referrals for other medical or mental health care. Over 160 of these were new patients.
- We were able to hire 2 part time Nurse Practitioner’s and contract with 1 additional clinic to help provide these services in 2024. We have added 1 full-time NP in 2025 to help with this need and see patients in a timely manner.
- We continue to see persons regardless of insurance, as we have a sliding fee scale for persons not eligible for State programs and/or under/uninsured.

Minnesota is fortunate to have many high-quality community clinics that serve underserved populations because of the SRHS grant. In fact, SMOC Family Planning is one of thirty-four SRHS grantees located in every corner of our state. Cutting the funding to this grant program does a disservice to Minnesotans who rely on our clinic and clinics like ours all across the state to receive care. Please do not support cutting this grant.

Sincerely,

Shari Dean, Director Health Services

Shari Dean, RN BSN PHN

Health Services Director

SMOC Family Planning, Reproductive Health Services and STI Clinics

909 4th Ave | Worthington, MN 56187

Phone: 507-295-4529 | Cell: 507.804.1983 | Fax: 1.507.372.4214

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