



Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Lee and Members of the House Capital Investment Committee,

I am writing to express Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation's strong support for Representative Wolgamott's HF 3497. This bill is necessary for St. David's Center to expand their services to children and families in the Greater St. Cloud area. Their facility will provide early childhood education, children's mental health services, pediatric therapies, and support services meant to stabilize families, all under one roof. Centralizing these essential services will streamline access for families and offer coordination and support with other systems including school districts, primary care, and other providers.

The availability of reliable childcare, much-needed mental health services, and pediatric therapies is a critical factor for families in our community. These services not only set up children for future success in school and life, but they also enable parents to engage fully in the growing economy and focus on their work with peace of mind, ultimately increasing productivity and employee retention.

GSDC recognizes the significant benefits that St. David's Center can offer not only to children and families, but also to small and large local employers and to the broader economy. Investing now in early intervention services will only yield long-term benefits for our community by ensuring children will receive the best possible care and preparation for their futures and through contributing to a stronger, more vibrant community that attracts and retains the talent needed for a growing workforce.

We urge the committee to include this appropriation in this year's bonding bill.

NeTia Bauman, CEO & President

Netia Bauman



ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT
705 Courthouse Square St. Cloud, MN 56303
Room 121
320-656-3601
stearnscountymn.gov

March 29, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to enthusiastically express Stearns County's support of St. David's Center to expand to the St. Cloud area to provide child and family development services. On February 6, 2024, the Stearns County Human Services Board gave approval to be the government sponsor for St. David's Center to request GO Bond Funding for predesign in the amount of \$400,000 in 2024. At the 2025 Legislative Session, they will seek funding to build and equip the site.

The need for childcare providers and child mental health services in Stearns County is significant. Currently, Stearns County has 279 licensed family childcare providers, 46 childcare centers, and 19 certified childcare centers providing before and after school programs. According to the United Way of Central Minnesota there is a need for over 5,000 additional daycare slots to support the workforce in the area.

In addition, children and adolescent mental health services are desperately needed in central Minnesota. The current wait times for children to receive a diagnostic assessment or therapeutic services is extremely lengthy. Many providers have a waitlist of 30-100 clients, with the waitlist for children under 5 years old being even longer. Most programs that specialize in autism are based out of the Twin Cities. Expansion to central Minnesota to provide these services is critical and desperately needed at this time.

St. David's Center is a well-respected leader in providing evidenced-based, effective services to our most vulnerable citizens. Thank you in advance for your consideration of providing support to St. David's Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Williams", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael Williams, PhD
County Administrator
Stearns County





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Dear Chair Lee and Members of the House Capital Investment Committee,

As United Way of Central Minnesota, we are writing to express our support of Representative Wolgamott's HF 3497 and the appropriation of funding for St. David's Center to expand their early intervention services to the Greater St. Cloud area. St. David's Center new facility in St. Cloud will provide crucial and essential services for children and families in our community.

Providing quality early childhood education and early intervention services are not only beneficial for children's cognitive, social, and emotional development but also essential for supporting working parents, promoting economic growth, and filling a significant gap in our community.

United Way of Central Minnesota is acutely aware of the struggle that so many working families are experiencing in accessing high-quality affordable childcare along with the growing need for children's mental health and pediatric services. St. David's Center is uniquely equipped to meet this need by providing a holistic, comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach that is tailored to the needs and strengths of each family.

We believe that by bringing together early childhood education, children's mental health services, pediatric therapies, and other support services under one roof, St. David's Center will create a comprehensive support network for families in our community. This integrated approach will not only improve outcomes for children but will also strengthen our community as a whole.

We ask the committee to include this bill in this year's bonding bill and support the establishment of this much-needed facility.

Sincerely,

Stephen Jones
President & CEO
United Way of Central Minnesota