



March 19, 2024

Chair Liebling and Committee Members  
House Health Finance and Policy Committee

**RE: Support for HF4396 – Clarifying the Essential Community Provider program**

The Essential Community Provider (ECP) designation was established in Minnesota in 1994. The designation recognizes that providers that serve high-risk, special needs, and underserved individuals are essential to communities across Minnesota. They are located urban and rural communities and include Hennepin Healthcare, Gillette Children's, Children's Minnesota, mental health clinics, community action programs and others ([full list here](#)). ECPs are required to:

- Provide or coordinate supportive and stabilizing services, such as transportation, child care, linguistic services, and culturally sensitive and competent services to its clients.
- Have processes for identifying a need for supportive and stabilizing services and for enabling clients to access these services.
- Maintain nonprofit status or be statutorily designated, be committed to the population served, and not restrict access or services because of a client's financial limitations.

To receive and maintain this designation, ECPs have to submit annual reports to the Minnesota Department of Health and undertake an extensive renewal process every five years. These processes ensure ECPs are serving the populations required and providing the supportive and stabilizing services communities rely on.

In turn, ECPs are to be offered a contract to be in-network in all health plan products regulated by the state. However, there are times when a contract hasn't been offered or, when one is offered, it includes reimbursement rates that are wholly insufficient.

**We support HF4396 because it clarifies the current ECP law to ensure contracts with reasonable rates are being offered for all state-regulated insurance products.** We have been working with the bill author and state agencies on the right language to provide that clarity and look forward to continuing those conversations as this bill moves through the process.

Clarifying these requirements will allow us to realize the promise of our state's ECP law, where Minnesotans have access to health care services delivered by essential providers in their communities.