



# STAR OF THE NORTH MATERNITY HOME

[www.StarOfTheNorthMaternityHome.org](http://www.StarOfTheNorthMaternityHome.org)

**Lots to Look Forward to in 2025!  
Will We See You?**



The Duluth Women's Expo is coming up on **Saturday, February 22nd** at the DECC in Duluth.

Star of the North is a beneficiary of the generosity of The Lundeen Group, who organizes the Expo. When you get your tickets, you have an opportunity to donate to Star of the North. Purchase your tickets online at [www.duluthwomensexpo.com](http://www.duluthwomensexpo.com)

Star of the North will also be exhibiting at the Expo with a few fun surprises in store! Make sure to come by and say hi while you're enjoying the Expo!

## Save the Dates!

February 22, 2025- Women's Expo (SON)  
March 14, 2025 - Salmon Dinner (SON TWP)  
August 2, 2025- Corn Roast (SON TWP)  
October 25, 2025- Chili Cook Off (SON IR)  
November 8, 2025 - Bake Sale/Tables at Holy Rosary Holiday Event (SON TWP)

Dear SON Supporters,

February 2025

## Looking Back on 2024 & Looking Ahead to 2025

*Lamentations 3:22-24. "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ..."*

As we begin the new year, we take a moment to reflect on 2024 and celebrate our accomplishments:

- Thanks to our dedicated staff and volunteers, we provided 24/7, year-round support to our moms & babies.
- In June, we marked our 5th anniversary at SON Twin Ports.
- SON TWP had the privilege of serving 10 incredible moms and their babies/toddlers.
- SON Iron Range reached a new milestone as "our new home was at full capacity with 4 moms and 6 babies/children starting in April, and all were working our program as we entered 2025.
- Streamlined our Phases program from four phases to three.
- Transitioned to a new accounting and payroll company mid-year.
- Generous donations received reduced our mortgage by \$70,000 for SON IR.
- Focused on reducing infrastructure expenses, including phones, maintenance, and bookkeeping costs.

As we look Forward to 2025, we have exciting goals and needs for the year ahead including:

- Recruiting new board members with expertise in IT, Marketing, and Clinical care, as well as we need two SON Iron Range located board members.
- Completing capital projects at SON IR & TWP that now are possible as generous funding is in place.
- Continuing to secure grants and financial support for our \$490,000 operating budget.
- Finding new insurance coverage to lower expenses.

Sincerely and with heartfelt Gratefulness,  
Dr. Sue McClernon, Executive Director & SON Team

## *A prayer for the first day of the new year*

*Dear God, As I step into the new year, I want to express my gratitude for guiding us through the challenges we've faced so far. The past twelve months have been a difficult journey, and I am thankful for Your strength, wisdom, and grace that you continually provide to sustain us. We hold on to hope, have faith and pray that the remaining months will be filled with breakthroughs, mercy, protection, and your guiding love. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen*

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Twin Ports | (218) 340-1645 | [sonmhtwp@gmail.com](mailto:sonmhtwp@gmail.com)

Iron Range | (218) 206-1381 | [sonmhir@gmail.com](mailto:sonmhir@gmail.com)

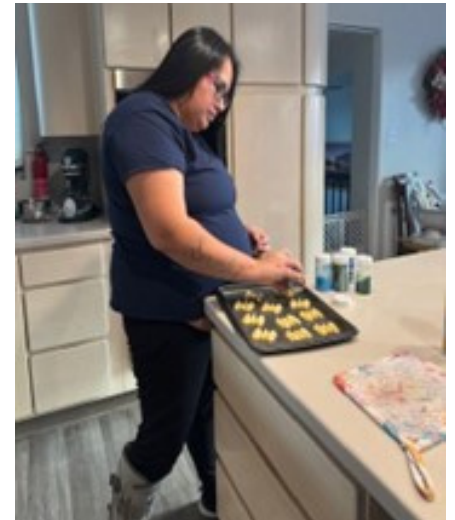
## 2024 Chili Cook-Off



Thank you to all who helped or donated to our Chili Cook Off 2024! A good time was had by all and Tums likely enjoyed a boost in sales. Mr. Bob Cogger took first place with his Alamo Chili, a chili to be remembered as the favorite by our satisfied guests. The event was a terrific success, with credit going to our many chefs, donors, volunteers, and, of course, attendees. We appreciate you all! Please plan to attend our next Chili Cook Off on October 25, 2025.

## SON IRON RANGE HOUSE UPDATE

Since we moved into our new home in January, 2024, we have had a full house since April with the same 4 residents with 3 full-time children and 5 part-time children. I can say, we never have a dull moment. Our children are growing by leaps and bounds, as two of our babies have started crawling and pulling themselves up on furniture. So adorable. We had one of our children turn 5 this week and another turning 1. We have also enjoyed a full and busy Christmas around here. One of our moms had many first-time experiences such as baking Christmas cookies, decorating and enjoying a Christmas tree and even having a Christmas dinner with a volunteer family of ours. To see her excitement gave us all such joy. The women have also been graduating from their recovery programs since they have been with us for an extended period of time. Two women have graduated from outpatient recovery. And all 4 have graduated from Circles of Security, a parenting class, with each receiving a diploma and pizza. We have been blessed with amazing grant support from United Way NEMN as they have brought partner agencies to us and supported us through grant funding and their amazing store when we need something.



## Staff Spotlight



Jennifer Frederick is our lead care coordinator at the Iron Range house. She joined the Star of the North team before the Iron Range house was even open, and has remained steadfast and loyal ever since. Having spent most of her adult life as a stay-at-home mom of three, she is delighted to be able to put her degrees in applied psychology and Biblical studies to work. In Star of the North, she has found a place where her passions for the pro-life cause, helping new moms, and serving the homeless meet. By God's Grace, He has a plan for each of us.

### Needs for SON Iron Range:

#### Check out our Target Registry

Disinfecting wipes  
Cleaning supplies  
Treadmill or stationary bike  
Volunteers and babysitters  
Part Time Staff

### Capital Needs:

Payoff Mortgage -\$225K  
High Capacity Washer/Dryer  
Refrigerator/Freezer

# SON Twin Ports

## Resident Spotlight Marlana and Kyra



The phrase “success story” may sound cliché, but Marlana brings true meaning to it. She and Kyra (2) have been living at Star of the North Twin Ports since August 2024 and put a face to why we are here and why we do what we do every day. Marlana has grown from someone who was reluctant to share her story to a strong young woman who is proud of herself and ready to tell people why. She spent years not knowing or understanding stability, but she and Kyra and Coda are finding their way.

When asked what Marlana wanted to talk about, she said, “Is talking about my sobriety too much? Because I’m really proud of it.” She has struggled with addiction since she was 13 years old, but seeing her baby on an ultrasound made her commit to her sobriety. While she continued to struggle after her daughter was born, she hit a point where she was done with guilt and shame. She was humbled to do better and give Kyra better, saying, “My baby deserved more than I was offering.”

Today, she is giving her daughter so much more! Marlana has celebrated 8 months of sobriety, along with Kyra’s dad. They are on their recovery journey together and taking baby steps to build their family. They spend regular family time, are thoughtful coparents, and are working to make important life decisions together. At the same time, they are working on themselves. He is working, and Marlana is excited to have started school at Fond Du Lac CC.

Her goals are to keep learning about parenting, keep in touch with her spirituality and mental health, get an education, and work towards an apartment. She demonstrates daily love for Kyra - a smart, spunky, funny JOY! (Except perhaps in the morning, when you are equally likely to get a big hug as a little growl...)

In talking with Marlana, her face told a story. She is real about her past, proud of her present, and excited about her future. She said it all when she said, “My daughter made me want to love myself. She’s the greatest gift I’ve ever received.” She is proud of herself and we are so proud of Marlana too!

### SON Twin Ports Needs

Visit our [Amazon Wish List](#) and search StaroftheNorth Queen Size Comforters

### SON TWP Capital Needs:

Payoff Mortgage - \$292K  
Bathroom Updates & Carpet Replacement (10K)

### OPENINGS Board Members

SON IR & TWP need Care Coordinators and Volunteers. Please apply online at [togetherforlifennorthland.org](https://togetherforlifennorthland.org)

## Russian Orange Tea

Courtesy of Linda Nervick

### Ingredients

6 cups cold water  
1 cinnamon stick  
6 whole cloves  
4 black tea bags  
1 cup orange juice  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1/4 cup sugar, more to taste  
1.2 tsp nutmeg, freshly grated

### Instructions

1. Bring water, cinnamon stick and cloves to a boil in a medium saucepan; remove from heat and add tea.
2. Steep, covered, for 5 minutes. Strain and discard the whole spices.
3. In a small saucepan, heat orange juice, lemon juice, sugar and nutmeg. Warm until the sugar dissolves.
4. Add the juice mixture to the tea. Taste and add more sugar if desired.
5. Reheat (don't boil!) and serve



## Salmon Dinner- Can You Help?

Become a **Premium Table Sponsor** for \$1500  
Become a **Table Sponsor** for \$800  
Donate an **Auction Item** Valued at \$500 or more

You may contact us at 218-310-6838 or email [togetherforlifennorthland@gmail.com](mailto:togetherforlifennorthland@gmail.com) for more information.



Maternity Home

Star of the North Maternity Home  
11 E Superior St, Executive Suites 273  
Duluth, MN 55802



Special Thank You to  
Our Grant Partners!



Salmon or Vegetarian Lasagna  
Advanced Ticket Sales Appreciated:  
[www.starofthenorthmaternityhome.org](http://www.starofthenorthmaternityhome.org)  
218-310-6838, 218-340-1645

\$25.00

St. James Catholic Church | 721 N. 57th Ave. W. | Duluth

Silent Auction, Gift Baskets and Art

Program | 6:30 PM

Live Music with Todd Eckart | 5:30 - 8:00 PM,

Dinner | 5:30 - 7:00 PM

Snow Date: Friday, March 21, 2025

Friday | March 14, 2025

Benefit for the Star of the North Maternity Homes

# Salmon Fundraising Dinner





Feb 11 2025

Dear MN Legislators,

Together for Life Northland, Inc. is a nonprofit organization based in Duluth, Minnesota, serving mothers, babies, and families in need of support before, during, and after pregnancy. We were incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization in the state of Minnesota on June 1, 2009. Our organization supports the Northeastern Minnesota region by providing pregnant women, babies, and families with care management support, access to resources and referrals to other organizations that support healthy pregnancies, healthy babies, and long-term family stability with 2 residential facilities. Star of the North Maternity Home Twin Ports (SONTWP) is located in Duluth, MN and Star of the North Maternity Home Iron Range (SONIR) in Hibbing MN. We have a total of 10 bedrooms for a total of 20 Moms and babies experiencing housing instability at any time.

The mission of SONIR is to provide a loving and stable transitional residential housing focused on assisting with mind, body and spirit with evidence-based programming geared to each resident's unique needs to assist Moms and their children back to independent living. The vision of SON Maternity Home is to aid women who are pregnant or with young child(ren) from a place of housing instability to self-sufficiency all while promoting and encouraging healthy choices in relationships, education, adoption, and or positive parenting.

We believe it is important to be serving pregnant mothers and mothers with young children up to age 10 who are experiencing housing instability and are interested in moving back to independence through housing and a program. When they arrive, they complete an individual Life Care Plan to share with us their needs, goals and aspirations for the next 1-3 years. We then break that into a 3 phase program where each phase identifies the detailed steps needed to achieve these goals. We start with their basic needs, give them a safe environment (often arriving from a shelter or unsafe situation) and then begin to provide inhouse education and modeling. They have one on one meetings with our Care manager and create a weekly calendar to work on those goals along with attending the base programming we have in the home. We collaborate with the Families in Transition program and a parenting expert comes in and teaches them each Monday (Circles of Security and parenting at the individualized needs they have). Tuesday we have a certified Life Coach available (every other week) and bible study. Friday we have a class called "Amazing Babies" from an ECFE instructor. We have access to a financial advisor, doula or any other program as they need. We connect them with existing programs in the region as well. Many of them are working on behavioral health issues with outside organizations and many continue working on substance use recovery programming.



In our family home each night, our Mom's and babies/children have a shared family style dinner nightly prepared by one of the Mom's. We work with them to learn to cook and ensure healthy eating (WIC provides classes as needed as well). We provide 24/7 staffing along with a certified evidence based life coach for them to move forward in their life care plan goals. They have access to an evidence based online educational video program called BrightCourse with over 1000 evidence based classes they can complete on their phone. We assist with providing babysitting and work to help them access childcare to ensure participating in their medical, mental health and if needed substance use programs. Transportation is critical to their attendance at appointments and we experience difficulty with either securing cabs or medical cabs often so our volunteers and staff transport our Moms most of the time.

**Our most recent annual report shows results from Sept 1st 2023 - August 31, 2024:**

We have an overall 68% success rate to independence.

**Results Time Frame - Sept 1st 2023 -August 31, 2024:**

We assisted 19 Moms and 20 full time babies and children (up to age 10) with some Mom's having visitation with other children during this time period. We had purchased a new home and had one month off in SON IR for the move and transition during this time.

1) SON Results Preterm Baby vs Full term Baby = 3 pregnant Moms joined the program - 2 Full Term and 1 Preterm baby\*

**Goal: 90% Actual: 66% (2/3)\***

\*SON Iron Range had 1 Mom who came to us at 24 weeks pregnant, 2 weeks later (Oct 23) she went into preterm labor unexpectedly after seeing her doctor that same day. SON IR had 1 full term birth and SON Twin Ports had 2 full term babies.

2) **Goal- 0% Actual = 0%** of babies were exposed to drugs or substances

3) % Residents attendance at Medical, Dental, recovery and mental health appointments -

**Goal = 95% attendance**

**ACTUAL SON TWP = 98% SON IR = 96% Overall = 97%**

% Residents attendance at Educational Sessions:

**Goal = 95% attendance**

**ACTUAL SON TWP = 97% SON IR = 96% Overall = 96.5%**

4) Phases Program - Residents achieve Phase 3 of 4 Phase program.

**Goal = Phase 3**

**SON TWP Avg. - Phase 2 (3 still active in program) SON IR Avg. - Phase 2 (4 still in the program)**

5) Life Coach Visits - (hour appointments biweekly with each Mom)

**Goal = 95% biweekly attendance**

**ACTUAL: SON TWP - 90%. SON IR - 90%**



6) Transportation Rides provided to ensure attendance at appointments and support

**ACTUAL: SON TWP - 520 SON IR = 710 Total rides provided = 1230**

(Med Cabs = 11, Staff = 189 Volunteer/Self/Families/Friends = 1030)

### Demographics of Moms we served

**Mom's Average Age** - average age is 28

16% come to us pregnant, 20% with infants, 54% with toddlers and 10% with older than 3 yrs of age

**Race:** We serve 47% American Indian, 37% White, 11% African, 5% Bi-Racial Moms

They stay an average of 3 -6 months, some as short as one month and some as long as 22 months (they are welcome to stay as long as needed).

### Race Breakdown:

TOTAL	American Indian	47%
	White	37%
	African	11%
	Bi-Racial	5%

### Counties Served:

Total	
2	Hibbing
3	Duluth
4	Twin Cities
3	Central MN
3	Cass Lake
1	Red Lake
2	Pine City Hinckley
1	Fergus Falls
19	TOTAL

### FUNDING:

We have an annual budget of \$490,000, about \$245,000 per home.

Each Mom and Child costs about \$115 per day to provide housing and programming.

Moms are signed up for government funding and use their food dollars for breakfasts, lunch and snacks and baby food.



We currently receive no county, state or federal funding. We had received a 5 year State of MN Positive Alternatives grant in 2021 that was halted 2.5 years into the grant. This occurred in Summer of 2023 with 30 day notice from the MN Dept of Health and for us was an annual loss of funding of \$72,324 per year. This grant was critical to stabilize our funding.

We have purchased both our homes and are paying mortgages and utilities and it is about 10-30% cheaper than leasing. A normal birth costs \$5-10K and a preterm birth costs an average of \$50-100K for a savings of \$40-90K per birth on just immediate medical expenses (can be up to \$1M easily). Long term cost savings on preterm babies is estimated to be about \$500k per child (March of Dimes). With interventions like Star of the North Maternity Home and other maternity homes, MN's preterm birth rate can be reduced (even a 10% reduction would save the State of MN \$24-54M in immediate healthcare costs).

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Private Grants - 41%

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Individuals - 19%

Organizations 6%

Investing in programs that reduce homelessness, along with evidence based programming can result in tens of millions in savings for Minnesota annually. These programs for Moms and babies should be a priority for the MN Dept of Health grants. We have participated with the MN State Dept of Health Oral Health Initiatives for women and babies and collaborate well with a variety of local, county and state agencies over the years.

Your consideration and support for restoring and increased funding for maternity homes is requested because we know:

- Single Moms with a baby are 12x more likely to be in poverty without support for education or job skills.
- Providing trauma informed care can reduce adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) which have lasting impacts if not prevented.

Thank you for your attention. Please review our latest newsletter for stories of our Moms and what they are doing!

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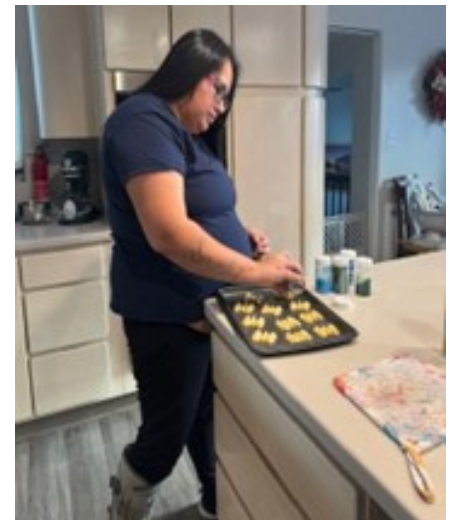
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Thank you to all who helped or donated to our Chili Cook Off 2024! A good time was had by all and Tums likely enjoyed a boost in sales. Mr. Bob Cogger took first place with his Alamo Chili, a chili to be remembered as the favorite by our satisfied guests. The event was a terrific success, with credit going to our many chefs, donors, volunteers, and, of course, attendees. We appreciate you all! Please plan to attend our next Chili Cook Off on October 25, 2025.

## SON IRON RANGE HOUSE UPDATE

Since we moved into our new home in January, 2024, we have had a full house since April with the same 4 residents with 3 full-time children and 5 part-time children. I can say, we never have a dull moment. Our children are growing by leaps and bounds, as two of our babies have started crawling and pulling themselves up on furniture. So adorable. We had one of our children turn 5 this week and another turning 1. We have also enjoyed a full and busy Christmas around here. One of our moms had many first-time experiences such as baking Christmas cookies, decorating and enjoying a Christmas tree and even having a Christmas dinner with a volunteer family of ours. To see her excitement gave us all such joy. The women have also been graduating from their recovery programs since they have been with us for an extended period of time. Two women have graduated from outpatient recovery. And all 4 have graduated from Circles of Security, a parenting class, with each receiving a diploma and pizza. We have been blessed with amazing grant support from United Way NEMN as they have brought partner agencies to us and supported us through grant funding and their amazing store when we need something.



## Staff Spotlight



Jennifer Frederick is our lead care coordinator at the Iron Range house. She joined the Star of the North team before the Iron Range house was even open, and has remained steadfast and loyal ever since. Having spent most of her adult life as a stay-at-home mom of three, she is delighted to be able to put her degrees in applied psychology and Biblical studies to work. In Star of the North, she has found a place where her passions for the pro-life cause, helping new moms, and serving the homeless meet. By God's Grace, He has a plan for each of us.

### Needs for SON Iron Range:

#### Check out our Target Registry

Disinfecting wipes  
Cleaning supplies  
Treadmill or stationary bike  
Volunteers and babysitters  
Part Time Staff

### Capital Needs:

Payoff Mortgage -\$225K  
High Capacity Washer/Dryer  
Refrigerator/Freezer

# SON Twin Ports

## Resident Spotlight Marlana and Kyra



The phrase “success story” may sound cliché, but Marlana brings true meaning to it. She and Kyra (2) have been living at Star of the North Twin Ports since August 2024 and put a face to why we are here and why we do what we do every day. Marlana has grown from someone who was reluctant to share her story to a strong young woman who is proud of herself and ready to tell people why. She spent years not knowing or understanding stability, but she and Kyra and Coda are finding their way.

When asked what Marlana wanted to talk about, she said, “Is talking about my sobriety too much? Because I’m really proud of it.” She has struggled with addiction since she was 13 years old, but seeing her baby on an ultrasound made her commit to her sobriety. While she continued to struggle after her daughter was born, she hit a point where she was done with guilt and shame. She was humbled to do better and give Kyra better, saying, “My baby deserved more than I was offering.”

Today, she is giving her daughter so much more! Marlana has celebrated 8 months of sobriety, along with Kyra’s dad. They are on their recovery journey together and taking baby steps to build their family. They spend regular family time, are thoughtful coparents, and are working to make important life decisions together. At the same time, they are working on themselves. He is working, and Marlana is excited to have started school at Fond Du Lac CC.

Her goals are to keep learning about parenting, keep in touch with her spirituality and mental health, get an education, and work towards an apartment. She demonstrates daily love for Kyra - a smart, spunky, funny JOY! (Except perhaps in the morning, when you are equally likely to get a big hug as a little growl...)

In talking with Marlana, her face told a story. She is real about her past, proud of her present, and excited about her future. She said it all when she said, “My daughter made me want to love myself. She’s the greatest gift I’ve ever received.” She is proud of herself and we are so proud of Marlana too!

### SON Twin Ports Needs

Visit our [Amazon Wish List](#) and search StaroftheNorth Queen Size Comforters

### SON TWP Capital Needs:

Payoff Mortgage - \$292K  
Bathroom Updates & Carpet Replacement (10K)

### OPENINGS Board Members

SON IR & TWP need Care Coordinators and Volunteers. Please apply online at [togetherforlifennorthland.org](https://togetherforlifennorthland.org)

## Russian Orange Tea

Courtesy of Linda Nervick

### Ingredients

6 cups cold water  
1 cinnamon stick  
6 whole cloves  
4 black tea bags  
1 cup orange juice  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
1/4 cup sugar, more to taste  
1.2 tsp nutmeg, freshly grated

### Instructions

1. Bring water, cinnamon stick and cloves to a boil in a medium saucepan; remove from heat and add tea.
2. Steep, covered, for 5 minutes. Strain and discard the whole spices.
3. In a small saucepan, heat orange juice, lemon juice, sugar and nutmeg. Warm until the sugar dissolves.
4. Add the juice mixture to the tea. Taste and add more sugar if desired.
5. Reheat (don't boil!) and serve



## Salmon Dinner- Can You Help?

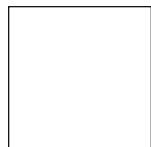
Become a **Premium Table Sponsor** for \$1500  
Become a **Table Sponsor** for \$800  
Donate an **Auction Item** Valued at \$500 or more

You may contact us at 218-310-6838 or email [togetherforlifennorthland@gmail.com](mailto:togetherforlifennorthland@gmail.com) for more information.



Maternity Home

Star of the North Maternity Home  
11 E Superior St, Executive Suites 273  
Duluth, MN 55802



Special Thank You to  
Our Grant Partners!



Salmon or Vegetarian Lasagna  
Advanced Ticket Sales Appreciated:  
[www.starofthenorthmaternityhome.org](http://www.starofthenorthmaternityhome.org)  
218-310-6838, 218-340-1645

\$25.00

St. James Catholic Church | 721 N. 57th Ave. W. | Duluth

Silent Auction, Gift Baskets and Art

Program | 6:30 PM

Live Music with Todd Eckart | 5:30 - 8:00 PM,

Dinner | 5:30 - 7:00 PM

Snow Date: Friday, March 21, 2025

Friday | March 14, 2025

Benefit for the Star of the North Maternity Homes

Salmon  
Fundraising Dinner





February 10, 2025

Representative Jeff Backer  
Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Centennial Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Backer and Members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to cutting funding from the Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRHS) grant in HF25. Southside Community Health Services has been a recipient of this grant since 2/1/2024 and the 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.

At Southside, we have been able to hire two additional midwife providers to ensure all patients have access to contraceptive counseling and their birth control of choice. I have been at this clinic for 7 years, the first 6 of which we did not have this grant, and I saw countless girls and women have unwanted pregnancies that upended their lives, pushed them further into poverty, and derailed their dreams, because they could not afford birth control.

Minnesota is fortunate to have many high-quality community clinics that serve underserved populations because of the SRHS grant and it is imperative that we continue to support these clinics so they can sustain into the future. Please oppose any cuts to the SRHS grant funding.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sheila Kennedy, DNP, APRN, CNM  
Medical Director  
Women's, Sexual & Reproductive Program Manager

Southside Community Health Services, Inc.  
4243 4th Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55409    324 East 35th Street Minneapolis, MN 55408



February 10, 2025

Representative Jeff Backer  
Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Centennial Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Backer and Members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to cutting funding from the Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRHS) grant in HF25. Center Clinic has been a recipient of this grant since 2007 and the 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.

In 2024, Center Clinic provided care to 1,568 patients. Ninety-eight percent of those patients were low-income, below 200% of the poverty level guidelines. Center Clinic was able to reach 8,925 people with our outreach efforts at 60 events. Two hundred seven patients were referred to health and other community service agencies, 52 individuals received mental health coaching, and 116 individuals participated in one of our support groups.

Minnesota is fortunate to have many high-quality community clinics that serve underserved populations because of the SRHS grant and it is imperative that we continue to support these clinics so they can sustain into the future. Please oppose any cuts to the SRHS grant funding.

Sincerely,

Enid Campos  
Clinic Director

February 12, 2025

Representative Jeff Backer

Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee

Re: HF25 – Supporting Women Act

Mr. Chair and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Supporting Women Act (HF25). I am a Professor of Law at Mitchell Hamline School of Law. I do not support the bill in its present form because it would make bad policy, as I will briefly discuss below.

Women and others who find themselves pregnant without wishing to be so need prompt, nonjudgmental assistance so they can consider the full range of their options. Neither of the types of entities that HF25 would fund typically provide such assistance. Rather, they usually try to make women keep their pregnancies or house women during or after gestation, often as part of a “Christian spiritual mission.”<sup>1</sup>

Studies show that women who had to keep mistimed or unwanted pregnancies were more likely to have to restrict their goals than women who aborted the pregnancy.<sup>2</sup> Others found that such women were significantly more likely to experience financial distress, and were more likely to live in poverty and use public assistance.<sup>3</sup>

HF25 would fund its goals by stripping money from the state’s Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRHS) fund, which provides contraceptives, STD testing, and contraceptive counseling to mostly low- or lower-income young people so they can avoid unwanted pregnancy and remain healthy in the first place.

This choice does not make good policy sense. First, the SRHS program is intended in part to provide sexual health services to Minnesotans living in rural areas and other places that otherwise would lack the care in question or have inadequate resources. It funds crucial services in or near your own districts.

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Alexandra Kissling et al. *Free but at What Cost? How U.S. Crisis Pregnancy Centres Provide Services*, 25 CULTURE, HEALTH & SEXUALITY 1024, 1034 (2023).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Ushma D. Upadhyay et al., *The Effect of Abortion on Having and Achieving Aspirational One Year Plans*, 15 BMC WOMEN’S HEALTH (2015), <https://bmcmwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-015-0259-1>.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Sarah Miller et al., *The Economic Consequences of Being Denied an Abortion*, NBER Working Paper No. 26662 (2020), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w26662>; Diana Greene Foster et al., *Effects of Carrying an Unwanted Pregnancy to Term on Women’s Existing Children*, 205 J. PEDIATRICS 183 (2019).

Second, ample evidence shows that improved access to contraceptives improves women's educational attainment and labor force participation.<sup>4</sup> Women with better access to contraceptives make more money over time than those who lacked access and had one or more unplanned pregnancies. Improved access to effective contraceptives allows women to plan their pregnancies, have fewer children, and keep those children from poverty. The children of these women are more likely to stay in school and earn more in adulthood.<sup>5</sup>

Taking funds from a program that provides sexual health care and contraceptives to Minnesotans and gives them to crisis pregnancy centers and maternity homes prioritizes giving birth often over planning pregnancies. This harkens back to times that most of us do not want to repeat. Before there was good access to reliable contraceptives, women worked outside the home less frequently, typically left the workforce once they married, and had limited professional opportunities.<sup>6</sup> The same was true with education. Why bother investing precious time pursuing a degree or providing a scarce university place to someone who might get pregnant or married and then drop out to raise children?

Of course, this doesn't mean that women and others who can get pregnant are best off avoiding parenthood altogether. It does, however, suggest that they are best off when they are able to control their fertility to fit their life plans. Such control is accessible through actual and financial access to long acting, reversible contraceptives and other effective, desired methods. Crisis pregnancy centers and maternity homes, on the other hand, offer no assistance in giving women agency over their fertility.

This bill, however well-intentioned, does not support women. Please aside and instead pursue evidence-based means of helping Minnesotans thrive.

Sincerely,

Laura Hermer  
Professor of Law  
Mitchell Hamline School of Law  
laura.hermer@mitchellhamline.edu

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Claudia Goldin et al., *The Power of the Pill: Oral Contraceptives and Women's Career and Marriage Decisions*, NBER Working Paper No. 7527 (2010), [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w7527/w7527.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w7527/w7527.pdf); Martha J. Bailey, *More Power to the Pill: The Impact of Contraceptive Freedom on Women's Life Cycle Labor Supply*, 121 Q.J. ECON. 289 (2006); Sara Yeatman et al., *Expanded Contraceptive Access Increased Women's College Completion in Colorado*, 41 HEALTH AFFAIRS 1754 (2022).

<sup>5</sup> Martha J. Bailey, *Fifty Years of Family Planning: New Evidence on the Long Run Effects of Increasing Access to Contraception*, Brookings Papers on Economic Activity (2013), [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2013a\\_bailey.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2013a_bailey.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Martha J. Bailey et al., *The Opt-In Revolution? Contraception and the Gender Gap in Wages*, 4 AM. ECON. J.: APPLIED ECON. 225 (2012); Goldin et al., *supra* note 4.



# MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action Partnership, Inc.

Serving Mahnomens • Hubbards • Beckers • Otter Tails • Wadena Counties

*Empowering People to Achieve Self Sufficiency*

February 10, 2025

Representative Jeff Backer  
Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Centennial Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Backer and Members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing to ask you to reconsider the cut to funding from the Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRHS) grant in HF25. The Family Health program at MAHUBE-OTWA CAP is a recipient of this grant and has provided preconception sexual and reproductive health services since 1965. The SRHS funding is critical to ensure our community has access to family planning services, such as contraceptive counseling, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and medical referrals, including breast health and female reproductive organ cancer testing, regardless of their insurance status.

By funding family planning, through the SRHS grant, we are able to save taxpayer money by decreasing teen and unwanted pregnancy rates, providing treatment and reducing the rates of sexually transmitted infections, screen for pre-cancerous cells that cause cervical cancer, and provide free, factual information to the public. The savings created is equivalent to an estimated taxpayer savings of \$7 for every public dollar spent.

Because of the funds received from the SRHS grant, our Family Health clinic is able to provide these important services, counseling, and education to anyone who faces difficulty accessing reproductive health services due to poverty, discrimination, age, disability status, lack of health insurance or transportation, or concerns about their confidentiality. Using SRHS grant funds, we are able to compensate the salaries of our clinics' staff, nurses, and medical providers; afford clinic spaces, utilities, and medical supplies; and purchase barrier and prescription contraception, STI testing kits, and infection prescription medications.

Minnesota is fortunate to have many high-quality community clinics that serve underserved populations because of the SRHS grant and it is imperative that we continue to support these programs and allow them to sustain into the future. Please, do not hesitate to contact us at MAHUBE-OTWA to learn more about this important program and how it serves our community.

Sincerely,

Liz Kuoppala, Executive Director

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER • [WWW.MAHUBE.ORG](http://WWW.MAHUBE.ORG)**

**BECKER**  
1125 WEST RIVER ROAD  
DETROIT LAKES, MN 56501  
PH: (218) 847-1385  
FAX: (218) 847-1388

**HUBBARD**  
120 NORTH CENTRAL  
PARK RAPIDS, MN 56470-0229  
PH: (218) 732-7204  
FAX: (218) 732-7206

**MAHNOMEN**  
118 W. MADISON AVENUE  
MAHNOMEN, MN 56557-0076  
PH: (218) 935-5022  
FAX: (218) 935-2770

**OTTER TAIL**  
128 W. CAVOUR AVENUE  
FERGUS FALLS, MN 56537-2102  
PH: (218) 739-3011  
FAX: (218) 998-3055

**WADENA**  
311 JEFFERSON STREET N.  
WADENA, MN 56482-1533  
PH: (218) 632-3600  
FAX: (218) 632-3602



February 10, 2025

Representative Jeff Backer  
Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Centennial Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Backer and Members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to cutting funding from the Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRHS) grant in HF25. Minnesota Community Care has been a recipient of this grant since July 2018 and the 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.

For the year 2024, Minnesota Community Care has been able to serve:

- 3,079 patients in family planning counseling
- 751 patients below 100% of the income poverty level
- 2,704 Chlamydia Tests, 37 positives received treatment
- 2,704 Gonorrhea Tests, 41 positives received treatment
- 1,866 received a method of contraceptive
  - 50 Copper IUD - \$298.05 each
  - 77 Hormonal IUD - \$309.00 each
  - 81 Implant - \$460.85 each
- 62,804 condoms distributed between 14 clinics

Minnesota is fortunate to have many high-quality community clinics that serve underserved populations because of the SRHS grant and it is imperative that we continue to support these clinics so they can sustain into the future. Please oppose any cuts to the SRHS grant funding.

Sincerely,

Monica C Herrera  
Manager of Health Education and Harm Reduction



February 10, 2025

Representative Jeff Backer  
Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Centennial Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Backer and Members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to cutting funding from the Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRHS) grant in HF25. Semcac Clinic has been a recipient of this grant since 2023 and the 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.

We use the Guttmacher Family Planning Investment Impact Calculator to determine the impact the SRHS grant has had on our community. With this tool, we determine that the SRHS grant has prevented 245 abortions in our service area and 992 unintended pregnancies. This funding provides critical services to people in our area.

Minnesota is fortunate to have many high-quality community clinics that serve underserved populations because of the SRHS grant and it is imperative that we continue to support these clinics so they can sustain into the future. Please oppose any cuts to the SRHS grant funding.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Montgomery-Nelson, RN, BSN

Clinic Director, Semcac Clinic



# Southwestern Minnesota Opportunity Council, Inc.

## SMOC Family Planning

909 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Worthington, MN 56187

Telephone: 800-658-2444

Fax: 507-372-4214

TTY: 507-372-7279

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*"Strengthening our communities through opportunities and service"*

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February 10, 2025

Representative Jeff Backer  
Chair, Health Finance and Policy Committee  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Centennial Office Building  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Backer and Members of the Health Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to cutting funding from the Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRHS) grant in HF25. SMOC Family Planning has been a recipient of the FPSP (Family Planning Special Projects) grant since 2009; according to records I have access too; I have been in this position since Feb 2020. At that time, we had FPSP grant funds, were awarded the next FPSP round of funds until 2024 when some of these funds transitioned to SRHS (Sexual Reproductive Health Services) grant funding. 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. We refer clients to SAGE programs for mammograms as appropriate and additional cancer screening with pap results needing further work up to reduce the risk of cancer and/ or other findings. Additionally, once we screen a client for pregnancy and it is positive, we refer and assist with connections to care for best prenatal and maternal outcomes. These referrals include appointments at their clinic of choice for prenatal visits, ensure they have access to insurance if needed to continue care, referrals to WIC to ensure proper nutrition during pregnancy, housing and dental care if needed, food shelves and other referrals as appropriate.

Funding for family planning, through the SRHS grant, saves taxpayer money by decreasing teen and unintended 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 in 2024 we have been able to offer several additional services-see below

- We increased outreach for STI testing sites with our additional funding received last year. We held several testing events in our rural local college campuses with over 194 students participating.
- We collaborated with local community partners to help with identification of needs for education within our rural setting related to the high number of teen pregnancies in hopes to reduce unintended pregnancies.
- SRHS funds allowed us to hire 2 part time Nurse Practitioner and contract with 2 additional clinics to help with this need. In one Quarter of 2024 we had 80 new clients, thus having access to additional providers was critical. (We had a backlog of clients needing to be seen due to loss of providers during COVID)
- 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.

*AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER*

Minnesota is fortunate to have many high-quality community clinics that serve underserved populations because of the SRHS grant and it is imperative that we continue to support these clinics so they can sustain into the future. **Please oppose any cuts to the SRHS grant funding.** This funding reduction would have a tremendous negative impact on current and potential new clients' access to SRHS in the rural communities we serve. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Terri Janssen, RN, BSN, PHN  
Health Services Director  
SMOC Family Planning and STD Clinics  
909 4<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Worthington, MN 56187  
[tjanssen@smoc.us](mailto:tjanssen@smoc.us)  
507-360-7579

