

May 8, 2025

Chair Rarick, Chair Wolgamott, Chair Fateh and Members of the Higher Education Conference Committee,

I am writing on behalf of CentraCare and our new University of Minnesota CentraCare Regional Campus St. Cloud in support of HF 2431. As you are aware this new academic partnership between our organizations is to train medical students to serve rural communities across the State. Through this collaboration, CentraCare is poised to create several rural residency programs and tracks to address the physician shortage facing rural communities. These training investments are critical to rural healthcare - simply put, physicians tend to stay where they train.

There are unique needs when it comes to educating a rural workforce, which is something the new University of Minnesota Medical School CentraCare Regional Campus St. Cloud will address. Likewise, the St. Cloud campus provides the chance to train in a rural setting which can open opportunities for students who might not have considered a career in medicine. We will focus on specialties of greatest need as the pillars of access to care in rural health including family medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, internal medicine, general surgery, and obstetrics/gynecology. These programs will also focus on care for underserved populations and equip residents to address healthcare disparities.

As we prepare to welcome our first class of 24 this fall it's imperative to our mission- to make rural life healthier- that these students can complete their residency program in a rural setting. Therefore, we extend our deepest gratitude for being included in both the House and Senate proposals to support rural graduate medical education opportunities in Central Minnesota. By providing robust residency options, CentraCare aims to build a pipeline of skilled physicians who have had training specifically focused on rural practice and will stay and serve locally.

Sincerely,



Jodi Gertken
Director, State Government and Community Relations