



I'm Breanna Heisterkamp, Forensic Nurse Examiner and Clinical Care Supervisor of the Hennepin Assault Response Team at Hennepin Healthcare. The Hennepin Assault Response Team is a forensic nursing program, providing care to victim/survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, child sexual abuse, and human trafficking at twelve hospital locations across many counties in Minnesota.

Minnesota is one of only six states that is using a county payor model. My program operates in multiple counties, and we currently receive different levels of reimbursement from each county. This uncertainty presents challenges to program stability and sustainability. I also have received calls from patients who have mistakenly received a bill for the care they were provided in a medical-forensic exam. This should never happen.

Victim/survivors should never have to worry about receiving a bill for their care. And the health care professionals, whether they operate out of a rural hospital or urban clinic, should keep their focus on providing exceptional care to every victim/survivor. House File 1279 will help make this possible. The creation of a state fund will help ensure consistency in billing and payment across the state.

The clarification of best practices for medical-forensic exams would transition Minnesota to a proactive treatment model from the current testing model. When a victim/survivor is being seen for a medical-forensic exam, testing would not be effective in identifying infection related to the assault. My program and others across the state manage sexually transmitted infections by offering preventative treatment, which also reduces the additional stress of multiple follow-up appointments for the victim/survivor.

Health care providers who do this work need the consistency that House File 1279 will bring. It's an important step in ensuring our focus remains at the bedside, providing trauma-informed, patient-centered care to victim/survivors. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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