

**Southside Community Health Services** has been a critical part of South Minneapolis' health care and social services community for over 50 years. Southside currently provides services in two separate facilities located one mile apart, impeding fully integrated care for patients, and space limitations at both locations mean no expansion is possible. The medical clinic is co-located in the Richard R. Green Central Park Elementary School. Southside has not only outgrown the space, but more importantly the facility is not conducive for the delivery of the high-quality healthcare Southside's patients deserve. I had the privilege of visiting myself and see the need for a new facility that will help serve some of the most vulnerable people in Minneapolis.

Just 36% of all low-income South Minneapolis residents have received care at a community health center, leaving over 56,000 whose needs may be unmet. Southside has a new patient wait list of over 1,000 for dental. Medical and behavioral health provider panels are full. Few local dental providers accept uninsured patients or those covered by Medicaid. There is a significant need for more clinical capacity to serve low-income patients in South Minneapolis. We know that our low-income communities deserve to have quality care, and this is a step towards achieving that.

In short, the current facilities do not offer the opportunity to reach thousands more in need and do not match the award-winning quality of care that Southside provides and that its patients deserve. More than 65% of Southside's patients were uninsured in 2022, demonstrating the continued need for clinics like Southside who provide a safety net for the community. Southside serves all regardless of ability to pay and accepts all forms of insurance and other patient assistance programs.

Bringing all services under one roof allows Southside to provide a holistic approach to care, with multi-specialty providers working together to address each patient's unique medical, behavioral health, dental, and vision needs. The increased capacity will allow current patients to receive medical, dental, and behavioral health care in one location.

Southside's mission of ***improving the health of our patients and communities by delivering exceptional care, removing barriers, and promoting healthy lifestyles*** and the foundational and historic focus on health equity and expansion of affordable access in the Federally Qualified Health Center program, demonstrates a clear alignment between the State of Minnesota's Health Minnesotans Goals to ***prevent future health disparities and to reshape our communities so that everyone will have the opportunity to be healthy.***

Sincerely,

*Jason Chavez*