



# Sawtooth Mountain Clinic

Together Through Life

March 31, 2023

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kate Surbaugh, I am the CEO of Sawtooth Mountain Clinic in Cook County, MN and I write today to urge you to include SF2966 in the current omnibus bill.

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC) was the recipient of a Preschool Development Grant focusing on community connection in 2021. This relatively modest grant was transformative for our remote, rural community. Continued funding is needed preserve this crucial work.

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic is the only provider of primary care in Cook County and the Grand Portage Reservation. The nearest specialists of any kind are located over 2 hours away for most county residents. Early Childhood services exist, but are fractured and underfunded.

The grant funding in 2021 allowed the SMC team to complete a comprehensive survey of early childhood services in the area. Enormous gaps were identified, including a devastating lack of childcare services for working parents, and poor understanding of the parental resources that were available. The information was used to add a Childcare expert to the Cook County PHHS team and SMC was able to hire an Early Childhood Navigator to help connect families to resources.

Without continued funding, these resources will go away. Rural and indigenous families deserve better. Please include SF2966 in the omnibus bill.

Thank you,



Kate Surbaugh

CEO

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic