



March 25, 2024

Senator Melissa H. Wiklund  
Chair  
Health and Human Services Committee  
2107 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Paul J. Utke  
Ranking Minority Leader  
Health and Human Services Committee  
2403 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members:

On behalf of Minnesota Latinos and Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES) front line and administration staff, I write to seek your support for SF 4986 to fund behavioral health services for underserved and uninsured patients.

In March of 2020, CLUES began the process of becoming a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) with a planning grant from MN DHS. From the beginning of this process, DHS has been supportive of CLUES, which held the promise of a more sustainable model of providing better access to a broader array of mental health and substance abuse services to the Latino community. CLUES is on the verge of receiving its CCBHC certification, which would provide insurance reimbursement through Medica. However, the financial projection for CLUES in year 1 of the CCBHC model is far from sustainable because CLUES serves a high proportion (approximately 55%) of clients who are not eligible for any healthcare insurance.


To be able to deliver on the CCBHC model, which has stringent criteria, CLUES is required to provide nine core services, and have capacity for quality assurance, data collection and reporting, as well as compliance infrastructure. This necessitates CLUES seeking out grant funding in the millions in order to survive and avoid cutting the staff and infrastructure it worked so hard to build.

CLUES is asking for financial support from the State to be able to deliver on the promise of increased access to sustainable behavioral health services for the Latino community and help reduce the financial and operational burden for others by preventing the need for higher levels of more expensive mental health and substance use interventions.

CLUES is unique because of its challenging payer mix, but most importantly, because it provides culturally responsive services to the Latino community, regardless of insurance eligibility. As an employer, I can attest that recruiting and retaining bilingual, multicultural staff and leadership is a significant challenge for a not-for profit organization like CLUES. All CLUES staff are bilingual and multicultural and reflect the community we serve, thus bringing a sense of belonging and healing to Minnesota's Latino community.

We urge your support for CLUES to receive funding from the State of MN to ensure the sustainability and infrastructure of these essential behavioral health services for our vulnerable communities in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruby Lee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ruby Lee  
President & CEO