

**Jovae Priebe, MAPE**  
**Testimony**

**SF5385**

Thank you, Madame Chair, and members of the committee for allowing me to testify today. My name is Jovae Priebe, and I work at the Forensic Mental Health Program as a Social Worker Specialist. While I don't work in the CARE program at St. Peter, its closure would impact the work I do at FMHP.

Currently, much like other facilities around the state, St. Peter faces a staffing shortage that would be exacerbated with the 16 additional beds being added to forensics due to closure of its CARE Program. We already struggle to fill beds due to our staffing shortage. This also would give us beds in a part of the program that are not necessarily needed. Specifically, we need secure beds to properly address the bed shortage issue and to appropriately and safely be able to support clients, while also keeping community safety in mind.

Opening more beds in a non-secure unit would force us to push forward patients who have not had their risk factors appropriately addressed. This ultimately is setting the patient, staff, and community up for possible traumatic events. We have a secure unit that is sitting empty right now because we don't have staffing for it. We need employees to be able to staff that unit before being able to assist with the waitlist and bed availability crisis.

While there are similarities in our work, we both provide distinctly important services. On the forensics side, we provide evaluations and specialized mental health treatment services to patients statewide who have been civilly committed by the courts as mentally ill and dangerous, with many of our patients having been charged with serious crimes.

The services provided by CARE include inpatient services for people who are chemically dependent and have a co-occurring mental illness, relapse prevention services, and aftercare planning. These services provide Minnesotans who are struggling with addiction the tools to succeed in their journey. Where will these patients get services now? How will we keep these patients and the community safe if we take away from the few beds already available?

Again, thank you, Madame Chair and members, for allowing me the opportunity to testify for the committee today. I hope you take the time to carefully consider the choice to close CARE Carlton and CARE St. Peter as it impacts many Minnesotans; not only those seeking the services CARE offers, and the staff who work to deliver those all-important services but also the community by not having the resources that are needed available. I am available for any questions.