



March 30, 2016

Tara Mack
Chair House Health and Human Services Reform Committee
Re: Written Testimony in Opposition to HF3374/3373

Representative Mack,

Thank you for accepting this written testimony in opposition to HF3374/3373. My name is Alissa Light, I am the Executive Director of Family Tree Clinic a 44 year old nonprofit family planning clinic in St. Paul as well as the Board Chair of the Reproductive Health Alliance (RHA), a statewide consortium of family planning safety net providers.

RHA members are the only family planning safety net clinics in many counties, towns and cities across our state. Our services are dedicated to family planning care, preventive breast and cervical cancer screenings, screening for domestic partner violence, and infertility prevention. We serve primarily low-income women and their families. We are the primary, and usually only, source of health care for over 70% of our patients.

I am writing on behalf of the RHA membership, as well as my own clinic, to express our sadness, disappointment and opposition to HF3374/3373, which would defund family planning clinics in our state by reallocating critical family planning grants. This will result in tens of thousands of women in our communities, across the state, left without care. It will inevitably increase poor health outcomes for low income women and their families, it will worsen the already stark health disparities plaguing our state, and it will adversely impact women living in rural areas where there are often few places to go for family planning care. Our clinics primarily serve people who earn less than \$900 a month, are uninsured, underinsured, or on public assistance programs. Our clinics also offer many social services including mental health care, homeless drop-in shelters, youth development, health education for the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing, navigator services, food security assistance, linkages to shelters, crisis counseling and transportation assistance.

Without the family planning safety net our most vulnerable communities, particularly low income women and their families will be left without access to family planning care and cancer prevention services. The void will be huge, and an already overextended community health center and county health infrastructure will be without capacity to meet the needs of these women.

This bill does harm, it does not serve a purpose other than targeting some of our most underserved community members, and it will only impact clinics ability to provide family planning health care. On behalf of RHA, Family Tree Clinic, and the thousands of women who need and use our services please do not let this bill move any further. Together we can support our shared communities to live healthy and vibrant lives.

Sincerely,

Alissa Light
Board Chair, Reproductive Health Alliance
Executive Director, Family Tree Clinic