

CENTRACARE Health
Paynesville

March 10, 2021

House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee

Attn: Chair Becker-Finn and Minority Lead Peggy Scott

Dear Chair Becker-Finn and Minority Lead Scott,

I am writing in support of the funding request made by Civil Legal Services for the upcoming biennium. As Director of Clinic Operations for Centracare Paynesville, we partner with civil legal aid attorneys to help our patients with many of the social issues which impact their personal health. Attorneys from Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid are professional, well-skilled, and provide zealous advocacy for their clients. We have over the last 5 years experienced exceptional success with patients who have struggled to maintain their health or have continued in a downward spiral with their health due to social issues that Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid has assisted them in resolving leading to improved health and welfare.

Because I can see the difference that Legal Aid makes to the people we serve, I am aware of the great importance of civil legal aid to our community, and to the entire state of Minnesota. Civil legal aid helps to close the justice gap, promote family safety, ensure individuals' basic needs are met, protects health, and helps the Court system operate more effectively and efficiently.

Due to resource limitations, civil legal aid is not able to meet the enormous demand for their services, are not able to offer competitive salaries relative to other public sector law firms. It is important to fund civil legal aid I fully support their funding request.

Sincerely,



Linda Bethke, Director of Clinic Operations CCH-Paynesville