

Chairman Clements and members of the Appropriations committee,

My name is Cleo Zagurski, and I am the Policy Fellow and Lobbyist for Reproductive Health Collaborative Nebraska. We work with a statewide network of 10 healthcare agencies, four of which are Federally Qualified Health Centers. Our network spans 22 counties, including 30 clinics, and works to advance access to high-quality reproductive healthcare for roughly 25,000 clients across Nebraska annually. We strongly urge the committee to advance LB 858.

We appreciate Senator Fredrickson for bringing LB 858. With the increased uncertainty surrounding federal funding sources, clinics across our network would greatly benefit from increased and reliable state support. Title X has long played a critical role in supporting access to family planning and preventative reproductive healthcare, and instability in this program directly impacts the patients FQHCs serve.

FQHCs provide essential preventative care to low-income and uninsured Nebraskans, including cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, prenatal care, and primary care. As Title X funding becomes less predictable, clinics are forced to stretch limited resources further, often while demand for care continues to grow.

These challenges are worsened by recent changes to Medicaid funding and eligibility. When Medicaid coverage is disrupted or reimbursement is delayed, FQHCs face additional financial pressure, and patients experience gaps in care. Together, Title X uncertainty and Medicaid changes create an unstable funding environment for clinics that are meant to function as the state's healthcare safety net.

The \$500,000 appropriation proposed in LB 858 is a modest but meaningful investment that would help stabilize services during this period of federal funding volatility. This funding would allow FQHCs to retain staff, maintain service capacity, and ensure patients can continue accessing preventative care close to home.

For many Nebraskans, FQHCs are their only source of healthcare. Within RHCN's network, 12,494 patients seeking reproductive care sought it at a FQHC. Advancing LB 858 ensures that we do not allow federal funding uncertainty to translate to reduced access for clients who already face significant barriers to care.

We urge the committee to advance LB 858.

Cleo Zagurski

Policy Fellow & Lobbyist