



November 21, 2016

Commissioner Edward Ehlinger, MD
Minnesota Department of Health
PO Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

Via Email

Dear Commissioner Ehlinger:

On behalf of the Minnesota Medical Association, the professional association of Minnesota's physicians, medical residents, and medical students, I write to offer support for the public interest served by PrairieCare's proposal to increase by 21 beds the capacity of its Brooklyn Park inpatient child and adolescent psychiatric hospital. I urge the department to reach a similar finding as part of its public interest review process.

The need for additional child and adolescent psychiatric beds in Minnesota is acute and continues to grow. All too often, children in mental health emergencies are being made to wait in emergency rooms or in pediatric units of the state's hospitals. These facilities are simply not able to provide the right type of care for these children and their families. Furthermore, the shortage of adequate inpatient facilities in the metro area forces many children to receive care at great distances from their home, making difficult family situations all the more problematic. Adding 21 new beds at PrairieCare's Brooklyn Park facility will help relieve pressure in the metro, but also in Greater Minnesota, too.

Minnesota is facing a significant shortage of mental health resources, particularly for pediatric patients, and PrairieCare's expansion of its inpatient capacity will help to alleviate some of the shortfall. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Agerter, MD
President
Minnesota Medical Association