



February 10, 2026

To: Chairperson Clements, and members of the Appropriations Committee

From: Anahí Salazar, Voices for Children in Nebraska

RE: Support for LB 858, Appropriate funds to the Department of Health and Human Services for federally qualified community health centers

Children and families across the state of Nebraska should have access to readily available healthcare. Community health centers (CHCs) are vital for thriving communities. They improve access to care, reduce health disparities and strengthen the overall health of communities. Especially for people who are underserved or face barriers to traditional healthcare. Voices for Children in Nebraska supports LB858 because it increases funds to expand community health access through community health care centers.

Community health centers increase access to healthcare, they provide primary care services regardless of a person's ability to pay, insurance status, or immigration status. This is especially critical for families with low socioeconomic status, rural populations, and uninsured or underinsured patients. In Nebraska, 121,271 people were served by health centers in 2023, including more than: 39,000 children under age 18 (33% of patients) and 5,000 children served in school-based service sites.¹

By offering care close to where people live and work, CHCs reduce transportation, cost, and scheduling barriers that often prevent people from seeking care early. Especially in rural communities where it can take families longer to reach access, in Nebraska 57% of CHCs are in rural areas.²

CHCs emphasize preventive services, such as: routine checkups, immunizations, cancer screenings, management of chronic diseases (like diabetes or hypertension). This focus helps catch health problems early, preventing serious complications. CHCs deliver preventative and screening services such as screening for depression; in Nebraska 90% of patients 12 or older were screened and had a follow up care plan if needed.³ Community health centers also help lower healthcare costs by reducing unnecessary emergency room use, preventing avoidable hospital admissions, and managing chronic conditions more effectively. This saves money for patients, insurers, and public health programs like Medicaid.

We want to thank Senator Fredrickson for this important legislation and the Committee for their time and consideration. We respectfully ask the committee to pass LB 858.

¹HRSA Data Warehouse, [Nebraska Health Center Program Uniform Data System \(UDS\) Data](#)

² Geiger Gibson Program in Community Health, Milken Institute of Public Health at The George Washington University, January 2025, [chc-medicaid-factsheet-ne-013025.pdf](#).

³ Id.