



# Essentia Health

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*Sent electronically to [Stegan.gilfemeister@state.mn.us](mailto:Stegan.gilfemeister@state.mn.us)*

Dear Mr. Gildemeister:

It has come to our attention that PrairieCare Hospital is seeking to increase the capacity of their inpatient child and adolescent psychiatric unit in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, by 30 inpatient beds. Essentia Health is submitting this letter in support of PrairieCare's proposal.

Due to the current shortage of inpatient psychiatric beds for children and adolescents, patients often are forced to wait many days for an available inpatient bed to open somewhere in Minnesota or its neighboring states. These patients are frequently transported across the state, far away from their families and support systems, which adversely impact children with psychiatric symptoms. Essentia Health believes by increasing the number of beds in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area will help decrease this problem not only in the Twin Cities, but throughout greater Minnesota as well.

Minnesota continues to face a substantial shortage of the array of mental health services needed to provide adequate services for patients through the state. This shortage has been and continues to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that there is a strong need for the additional beds proposed by PrairieCare and that these beds will help to address the shortage of services for children and adolescents requiring inpatient care. Essentia Health believes that the quality of care provided by PrairieCare in all of its facilities, and specifically in the Brooklyn Park Hospital, is excellent and that this organization is well-positioned to provide adequate staffing models and overall complete inpatient services in a way that will meet the needs of the additional patients they will be serving in the additional beds requested.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments regarding PrairieCare's proposal for additional beds. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jon Pryor, MD, MBA  
President  
Essentia Health – East

Bradley Beard, MHA, FACHE  
Chief Operating Officer  
Essentia Health - East