



Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians

Executive Branch of Tribal Government

Office of the Chief Executive

Melanie Innes
Minnesota Department of Health
Office of Rural Health and Primary Care
PO BOX 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

December 11, 2025

Re : Capital Improvement Grant Application for Mille Lacs Health System

Dear Melanie,

As Chief Executive of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, it is my duty to advocate and promote initiatives that will improve the lives of our tribal members. As a resident of a rural Northern Minnesota region, access to state-of-the-art health facilities can be challenging. Mille Lacs Health System located in Onamia, Minnesota strives to improve the hospital facility and services provided to benefit our communities.

Please allow this letter to serve as support for Mille Lacs Health System's project to remodel and expand its surgical department. This need will significantly improve access to safe, high-quality surgical care as many Band members rely on the hospital for urgent care, specialty services, surgical procedures, and follow-up care due to its proximity to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe reservation. Having a modern and reliable facility nearby is vital for supporting health equity in our communities as many Band members face transportation barriers that limit accessibility to long-distance facilities.

The hospital is an essential partner in caring for members of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Expanded surgical capacity, including the ability to provide shoulder, knee, and hip replacements will greatly reduce the need for Band members to travel 40–60 miles for routine procedures. The planned remodel will allow the hospital to continue providing safe, high-quality surgical care.

I respectfully request the approval of Mille Lacs Health System's grant application and look forward to continued collaboration to support and improve the well-being of our people.

Miigwech (thank you) for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Virgil Wind".

Virgil Wind
Chief Executive
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe