

Urgent: Loss of Critical Youth Health Services in San Francisco's Tenderloin

To whom it may concern:

My name is Lisa Cadillo, and I am a frontline healthcare worker at The Michael Baxter Larkin Street Youth Clinic in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. I am writing to inform you that our clinic is being permanently closed, and to urgently ask for your support in protecting the essential services we provide to some of the city's most vulnerable young people.

MB Larkin St. Youth Clinic has served youth in the Tenderloin for many years as a low-barrier, walk-in medical and mental health home. Our patients are predominately unhoused or marginally housed young people, many of whom are LGBTQ+ living with chronic health conditions, disabilities, trauma and significant barriers to care. For them, our clinic is not just "an option" – it is often the only place where they can safely and consistently receive care.

At MB Larkin St. Youth Clinic, we provide:

- Same-day walk-in visits
- Wound care and start the management of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, skin conditions, etc.
- Sexual and reproductive health services
- Harm reduction Services
- Gender affirming and LGBTQ+- competent care
- On-site therapy and mental health support

Many of our patients are not equipped to navigate complex healthcare systems, appointment lines, portals or multi-step referral processes. Some have learning disabilities or cognitive challenges. Others manage trauma, addiction, or unstable housing. They are frequently turned away, dismissed, or overwhelmed when they try to seek care in larger, more traditional systems.

At our clinic, they are heard. They know our space, our staff and our routines. They know that they can walk in, be called by their name, explain what is going on in their own words and receive respectful, trauma-informed care without judgment.

When we tell a young person with diabetes that we will see them today and help them manage their wounds if they have any and help them get back on meds or insulin , get them their needed diabetes management supplies- they believe us, because we have already earned that trust over time.

Closing this clinic does not simply "redistribute" patients. It abandons a group of young people who already fall through every crack. There is no guarantee – and in many cases, little likelihood – that they will successfully transfer to other clinics or hospital systems, especially those that are already overburdened and not built with their specific needs in mind.

I am asking you as a community partner and as someone who cares about equity in San Francisco, to recognize how devastating this closure would be for the youth in the Tenderloin.

Our services are not theoretical; they are daily, tangible support for real young people who will be left without a safe place to go.

I urge you to:

- Help amplify this issue within your networks, including community organizations, schools, and local media
- Advocate for maintaining or replacing youth-focused, low-barrier services in the Tenderloin
- Ask decision-makers what concrete plan exists for continuity of care for our current patients – and how they will be held accountable if that plan fails

The young people we serve deserve better than to wake up one day and find that the only clinic where they feel safe has disappeared. Thank you for your time and for any action you can take to help protect vital youth services in the Tenderloin.

Sincerely,

Lisa Cadillo

Medical Evaluation Assistant at MB Larkin St. Youth Clinic