

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in strong support of continued County funding for the American Diversity Group (ADG) Free Medical Clinic and the renewal of its contract with Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services for Fiscal Year 2027. My perspective comes not as an outside observer, but as a student whose academic and professional path has been deeply shaped by my experience volunteering at ADG.

As a pre-medical student, I sought out opportunities that would allow me to meaningfully engage with patient care, and ADG has provided an experience far beyond what I could have found elsewhere. Through my time at the clinic, I have been directly involved in patient intake, triage, vital sign collection, chronic disease screenings, and health education, all while working alongside licensed medical professionals. More importantly, I have learned how to approach care with cultural humility, empathy, and respect for patients from diverse and often underserved backgrounds.

One experience in particular solidified my understanding of why ADG's work is so essential. During an outreach event near Gaithersburg High School, I spoke with a homeless veteran who had no consistent access to healthcare. He shared that he could not afford his prescribed medications and would split his pills in half to make them last longer. Hearing this firsthand was deeply impactful—it highlighted not only the financial barriers patients face, but also the difficult decisions they are forced to make just to manage their health. Encounters like this made it clear to me that without organizations like ADG, individuals like him would have little to no access to the care they need. Through ADG, patients in these situations are able to receive medical attention, guidance, and support that would otherwise be out of reach.

Another aspect that makes ADG especially impactful is its ability to meet a wide range of patient needs through diverse medical specialties. Each week, ADG brings in physicians from different fields—ranging from dermatology to cardiology—based on the needs of the community they are serving. In my experience, many nonprofit healthcare organizations are limited in scope and tend to focus on a single area of care. ADG stands out because of its breadth and adaptability, ensuring that patients are not turned away due to the complexity of their conditions. This diversity allows ADG to provide more comprehensive, patient-centered care and better serve individuals with varying and often interconnected health concerns.

Beyond individual growth, ADG serves as a powerful academic and professional pipeline for students like me. Its formal partnerships with universities and its structured, hands-on training environment demonstrate a clear commitment to developing the next generation of healthcare providers. The success of student volunteers gaining admission to competitive medical programs reflects the strength of this model. ADG is not simply a place to gain hours; it is a place where future physicians are mentored, challenged, and prepared to meet the realities of modern healthcare.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge county leadership to renew ADG's contract and restore its FY27 funding. ADG is both a critical healthcare resource for underserved communities and a training ground for students who will go on to serve those same communities in the future. Losing this program would mean losing not only access to care for vulnerable populations, but also a vital pathway for students committed to health equity and service. I believe deeply in ADG's mission and impact, and I hope you will continue to support its work.

Respectfully submitted,

Naga Sai Sri Charan Barla