

To the Montgomery County Council,

I am writing to strongly support 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. I'm not just speaking from the outside—I'm a student whose academic and career goals have been heavily influenced by my experience volunteering at ADG.

As a pre-med student, I was looking for a place where I could get real, meaningful exposure to patient care, and ADG has given me an opportunity far beyond what I expected. At the clinic, I've helped with patient intake, triage, taking vital signs, screening for chronic diseases, and providing health education, all while working alongside licensed healthcare professionals. More importantly, I've learned how important it is to treat patients with empathy, respect, and cultural awareness. ADG serves uninsured individuals, immigrants, refugees, and others facing serious health challenges, and being part of that has shown me that medicine is not just about knowledge—it's about trust, compassion, and connection. This experience has played a big role in shaping my goals in healthcare.

ADG is also more than just a volunteer opportunity—it's a strong pathway for students interested in medicine. Through its partnerships with universities and its structured, hands-on training, it clearly invests in developing future healthcare professionals. Many students who volunteer here go on to get accepted into competitive medical programs, which shows how impactful this experience is. It's not just about getting hours; it's about being mentored, challenged, and prepared for real-world medicine.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage the Council to renew ADG's contract and restore its funding for FY27. ADG is not only a vital healthcare resource for underserved communities, but also an important training ground for students who want to give back to those same communities in the future. Losing this program would mean losing both access to care for vulnerable populations and a valuable opportunity for students committed to service and health equity. I truly believe in ADG's mission and impact, and I hope you will continue to support it.

Respectfully,

Vedadrish Kothakonda