



The  
CENTER for  
VICTIMS of  
TORTURE

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## **Center for Victims of Torture Announces Asylum Medicine Clinic with Physicians for Human Rights and the Phillips Neighborhood Clinic**

**ST. PAUL, Minn.** — The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) announces the launch of an Asylum Medicine Clinic in St. Paul, where asylum seekers can obtain free forensic medical evaluations (FMEs), which provide key support during the asylum process.

The new clinic was established in partnership with Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), along with the Phillips Neighborhood Clinic through University of Minnesota Physicians. The Asylum Medicine Clinic operates out of CVT's St. Paul Healing Center, where asylum seekers who are applying for legal status in the United States can go to receive forensic medical and mental health evaluations.

PHR has more than 20 of these [asylum clinics](#) across the United States, but this is the first to open in Minnesota, bringing a much-needed resource to asylum seekers. "This was a huge and long-standing gap in services for asylum seekers living in Minnesota," said Sara Nelson, MSW, LICSW, program manager, CVT St. Paul Healing Center. "This is the only PHR clinic in the state, so it is critical for the community."

Asylum attorneys whose clients need a forensic evaluation in Minnesota can access the [PHR website form](#), which collects the information needed for the [Phillips Neighborhood Clinic](#) to set up an appointment at CVT's St. Paul location. These PHR visits are led by licensed physicians with medical students serving as scribes. The Phillips Neighborhood Clinic is student-run and faculty-supervised, offering free medical care within the community. The forensic medical evaluations are conducted in CVT's clinic because the exam room was specially designed using trauma-informed practices to ensure clients feel comfortable and respected.

Nathan Bertelsen, MD, MScPH, associate professor of medicine at the University of Minnesota, worked closely with CVT to establish this clinic, seeing the need for FMEs through his work with patients at the Phillips clinic. "This PHR clinic is an essential part for survivors as they rebuild their lives and inspire us with their strength and resilience. This builds inclusion and community on so many levels, and we are so grateful to CVT for hosting this unique collaboration," he said.

"The need is crucial – we have already had two patients access the clinic and one had an urgent situation with an upcoming hearing," Nelson added. "Offering these evaluations allows us to help asylum-seekers and attorneys document appropriate medical and psychological evidence for their asylum cases and greatly increases the chances of a positive outcome when they are heard."

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*The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit organization with offices in Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Uganda, United States and additional project sites around the world. Visit [www.cvt.org](http://www.cvt.org)*