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**For Immediate Release**

**Contacts: Kim Christoffel and Kat Donnelly, North Star Health Collective: (800) 719-6487, ext. 6**

Tomorrow, Friday September 5<sup>th</sup>, at 12 pm there will be a press conference at the southeast entrance of Ramsey County Jail on Lafayette Road in St. Paul. This is North Star Health Collective's first official press conference.

### **LOCAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS DENOUNCE POLICE DETENTION AND ABUSE OF MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS**

Saint Paul, MN – A group of local and national health care providers has been offering first aid to protesters and city residents during the RNC protests. This aid has been offered to people exercising their first amendment rights to protest. The care providers have witnessed law enforcement harassment of EMTs, RNs and other first aid providers while they were engaged in providing care, including approximately 25 arrests (10 of which were made during the writing of this press release Thursday night). Members of the North Star Health Collective (NSHC), a local group coordinating medical response during the protests, will hold a press conference Friday morning to bring attention to these incidents and testimonies of medical personnel present in the street.

NSHC will be highlighting examples like this:

\*On Monday evening, two clearly marked providers, giving care to a paraplegic, were forcibly thrown to the ground by police and arrested. Explained Sean P. McCoy, a U.S. Navy Veteran and trained EMT:

“My medic partner and I were treating a handicapped male in a wheelchair for pepper spray to the face at the parking lot of Jackson Street. In the process of treating the patient, we were surrounded by several police officers in riot gear and forcibly thrown to the ground and told we were under arrest. We were then forcibly removed from our patient, handcuffed, and forced to lay face down on the ground while the officers proceeded to cut our bags off of us and remove all of our medical gear by dumping it on the ground.”

Mr. McCoy was held for over 55 hours in Ramsey County Jail, and, like many other protesters, locked in his cell for over 23 hours a day.

During the press conference, members of the group will display examples of the kind of projectiles they have seen police fire into crowds of people, often at point blank range.

Explained Garth Kahl, an NEMT-B from Oregon:

“There is a reason that these are called less-lethal weapons as opposed to non-lethal weapons. The indiscriminate firing of baton rounds, sponge grenades, and other blunt force projectiles in crowded areas is highly dangerous and irresponsible.”

Kim Christoffel, a graduate student in social work at the University of Minnesota and a local coordinator with NSHC, states:

“Our goal has been to keep people safe in areas that local EMS vehicles cannot quickly reach. Our observation of harassment of medical personnel contradicts police statements that claim that their actions have been directed at keeping everyone safe during the protests. It is shocking that providers have been arrested while attending injured and distraught people. NSHC never thought it would be necessary to say it, but apparently it is: ‘Providing medical care is not a crime.’”