

NEBRASKA HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION

3900 Northwest 12th Street, Suite 100

Lincoln, Nebraska 68521-3037

Phone: 402-435-3551 Fax: 402-475-6289

www.nehca.org

Serving Those Who Serve

February 1, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter as support from The Nebraska Health Care Association for Douglas County Health Center's campaign and application for federal funds to remodel a portion of the facility. The Nebraska Health Care Association (NHCA) is a private, nonprofit trade association that represents governmental, non-profit, and for-profit long term care facilities in the state of Nebraska. Douglas County Health Center is not a member of NHCA yet we have worked together to improve the quality of life for individuals receiving long term care, especially those individuals in need of long term care through the use of Medicaid funding.

Ninety-eight percent of Douglas County Health System's resident population receives Medicaid funding to pay for their care. On average, the Medicaid program underfunds costs approximately \$19.00 per patient day. Yet, Douglas County Health Center has achieved a Five Star Rating and low staff turnover.

Douglas County Health Center opened in 1887 when it provided health care services to persons with mental illnesses and contagious diseases. It provided acute care and was the only hospital-based emergency room in Douglas County in the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1970s, Douglas County closed the acute care medical services division. Currently, the residents in one area of the building reside in rooms that contain four beds with bathrooms that are not handicap accessible by residents in wheelchairs or those who walk with walkers as the bathroom doors are only 24 inches wide. The majority of these residents are indigent persons with behavioral needs and infectious diseases.

The Douglas County Health Center Foundation is considering embarking on a new capital campaign to raise \$11 million to completely renovate four floors of the old acute care wing. The four-bed wards would be eliminated and new semi-private and a few private rooms would be created complete with handicap restrooms in each resident room. These restrooms would include a sit down shower that is wheelchair accessible. The mechanical systems and windows would be updated to modern, energy efficient systems that would save energy costs and ultimately reduce operating expenses for the future as Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement becomes tighter each year.

Douglas County Health Center works alongside other nursing facilities in the Omaha metro area, and across the state, to care for residents unable to be treated at other facilities. It works with a physician specializing in geriatric behavior problems, so as to improve the quality of care of its residents, and it works with other facilities and the specialist to address the care provided by all facilities in the state. NHCA supports the campaign to request funding in enhancing the quality of life for present and future residents of Douglas County Health Center.

Sincerely,



Abbie Widger
Acting Executive Director

cc: Mr. Jim Tourville
Douglas County Health Center
4102 Woolworth Ave
Omaha NE 68105

ahca

An Affiliate of the American Health Care Association