



January 12, 2010

The Honorable E. Benjamin Nelson
United States Senate
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2706

Dear Senator Nelson:

As an active player in Northeast Nebraska, I am writing to express my support for Faith Regional Health Services' (FRHS) pursuit of federal appropriations for Fiscal Year 2010. Our goal here at Elkhorn Valley Economic Development Council is to promote new economic development opportunities for the area and to also support existing businesses in the three-county region. The rural communities and citizens we serve are the same that FRHS provides services to on a daily basis. Faith Regional Health Services has been providing health care to the residents of northeast and north-central Nebraska since 1923. A lot has changed since 1923, and FRHS has made good strides to keep up with the ever growing technology and this venture is another way for them to continue that effort.

As you know, Nebraska's large geographic mass along with its highly decentralized population creates major challenges for healthcare providers, including lower economies of scale and higher costs, physician and nursing shortages, and considerable additional effort expended to increase access for the rural populations. Healthcare providers in Northeast Nebraska have moved forward boldly on their missions in spite of these challenges, but our rural providers are especially in need of assistance to increase access and enhance quality. FRHS is in an ideal position to extend its technological capabilities to the rural hospitals and clinics due to its centralized location and access to capital.

FRHS's efforts will provide our rural hospitals and clinics access to the most advanced medical imaging technology; they will also give our clinicians immediate access to medical history, test results, and tele-assessments. Currently, much of this is done with outdated technology at a much higher cost and over significant distances and lengths of time.

As you know, congressional funds are available to help offset the costs of such an undertaking. We in Northeast Nebraska are excited about the pursuit of these funds, and about what they could do for our healthcare system in Northeast Nebraska. We sincerely appreciate your support and are sure you will consider this a cause very worthy of federal funding. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your efforts on our behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Simonsen".

David Simonsen
Executive Director
Elkhorn Valley Economic Development Council