

Nebraska State Legislature

SENATOR KATE SULLIVAN

District 41

State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4604
(402) 471-2631
ksullivan@leg.ne.gov



COMMITTEES

Education
Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

January 13, 2010

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

Dear Senator Nelson:

Please consider this letter as an indication of my support for Faith Regional Health Services' (FRHS) quest for federal funding for Fiscal Year 2010. FRHS is the largest community-based not-for-profit healthcare system in northeast Nebraska and a regional leader in expanding and enhancing the quality of health care throughout their service area. Many of my constituents consider FRHS to be their primary health care provider.

FRHS is in the midst of a \$10 million project to update their health records system in compliance with the federal electronic health records mandate. This project is an extension of previous investments by FRHS in education, technology and clinical outreach. As part of their efforts, FRHS would also like to extend the benefits of electronic health records to their partners in rural hospitals and outreach clinics.

Nebraska's size and scattered population creates specific challenges for health care providers including higher costs due to lower economies of scale, physician and nursing shortages, and costs incurred to increase health care access for rural populations. In spite of these challenges, health care providers have moved forward but rural providers particularly need assistance to increase access and enhance quality.

FRHS is in an ideal position to extend its technological capabilities to rural hospitals and clinics due to its centralized location and access to capital. Their efforts will provide rural hospitals and clinics access to the most advanced medical imaging technology; they will also give clinicians immediate access to medical history, test results, and tele-assessments. Currently, this is done with outdated technology at a much higher cost over significant distances and lengths of time.

Federal funds are available to help offset the costs of implementing electronic health care records systems. It's gratifying to know that Congress acknowledges the cost and provides funds to assist with health care providers with this process. These funds are very important to the provision of updated health care in northeast Nebraska.

Thank you for your ongoing support on behalf of your constituents in northeast Nebraska. Faith Regional Health System's health records update is a cause worthy of federal funding. Your support of their efforts is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kate Sullivan".

KATE SULLIVAN
State Senator