

# St. Monica's



*Behavioral Health Services  
for Women*

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February 24, 2010

The Honorable Ben Nelson  
720 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

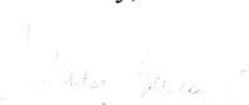
I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the Southeast Nebraska Behavioral Health Information Network's (SNBHIN) application to earmark funds for the purchase of Electronic Health Record (EHR) applications to more fully integrate the Health Information Exchange (HIE) system currently in development for behavioral health providers in southeast Nebraska.

St. Monica's provides substance abuse and mental health treatment to women and their families in Nebraska. An integrated health information exchange system will significantly improve our ability to treat Nebraska citizens with behavioral health conditions in a number of ways.

Sharing of behavioral health records will reduce disparate health outcomes for consumers, which is most often experienced by lowest income people. It will also allow us to provide more services to our clients through removal of duplication of paperwork by St. Monica's staff that is required by funders. It will provide us with a management tool for people who are waiting on more than one agencies waiting list for services. This system will also allow our medical staff to better treat and refer clients who are suffering from physical health conditions.

SNBHIN's leadership in the development of an HIE system has been aggressive and successful. National, state, and local funding sources have invested in the HIE system and still more funds are needed. We urge you to consider an earmark for this project which will improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of the behavioral health system in Southeast Nebraska, provide a roadmap for the adoption of an HIE system for the rest of the state and most importantly improve the quality of life for Nebraska citizens with behavioral health conditions.

Sincerely,

  
Mary Barry Magsamen  
Executive Director