

February 11, 2010

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

Dear Senator Nelson:

The Southeast Nebraska Behavioral Health Information Exchange (SNBHIN) has requested your support of an earmarked appropriation. I endorse their application for funding the innovative and critical work they are doing to implement a replicable and scalable behavioral health records system in Nebraska. I have been working as a research partner of the project for the last two years and believe that the work they are doing is critical to achieving the vision of widespread electronic health records for all Americans. Although behavioral health issues are among the most pervasive and costly conditions Americans experience, in most cases behavioral health providers have not been included in provider federal incentives plans and state implementation funds for electronic health information exchange.

SNBHIN will promote quality care through efficient, secure, and confidential handling of data and patient information to provide seamless integrated patient care and access from multiple locations. As longitudinal data becomes available through this system, researchers will be better equipped to make recommendations on effective practices. This is sorely needed in behavioral health, particularly in the out-patient environment.

I am hopeful you will give SNBHIN's proposal every consideration and I would be delighted to visit with you or your staff about this project if that would be of help.

Sincerely,



Nancy Shank
Associate Director