

## CORNHUSKER PLACE

OF LINCOLN LANCASTER COUNTY, INC.

A BEACON OF HOPE

720 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
LINCOLN, NE 68508-2949  
402-477-3951  
FAX: 402-477-3922  
TDD: 402-477-9117

February 15, 2010

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

Dear Senator Nelson,

This letter is in support of Southeast Nebraska Behavioral Health Information Network's (SNBHIN) request for earmarked funds which would assist in 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.

Cornhusker Place of Lincoln, Lancaster County Inc. has been providing substance abuse detoxification and treatment services in Southeast Nebraska for the past 26years. While we are proud of our ability to work together with our peer agencies to address client needs, we are today hampered by our inability to integrate and share information that would support our collective service provision. An integrated health information exchange system will significantly improve our ability to treat Nebraska citizens with behavioral health conditions in a number of ways.

Our waiting list for treatment services includes many consumers who wait an average of several weeks before they can access services. Consumers may be on multiple waiting lists for treatment services with each agency unaware of the efforts of others in attempting to find a suitable treatment bed. An integrated HIE system would provide us with an avenue to research the consumer's position on other agencies' waiting lists and promote communication with other behavioral health agencies to expedite the delivery of services based on consumer need.

Additionally, our agency's ability to coordinate primary and behavioral health would be improved through access to an electronic health record (EHR) system. Using this system, our clinicians would be able to produce an electronic summary of care record for every client's transition in care. The electronic summary of care could then be accessed by other primary and behavioral health care providers in an effort to provide efficient, coordinated medical and behavioral health services.

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.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Tegeler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "T".

Phil Tegeler  
Executive Director  
Cornhusker Place