

**SAINT FRANCIS
MEMORIAL
HOSPITAL**



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January 11, 2010

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

Dear Senator Nelson,

As a CEO of a Critical Access Hospital in Northeast Nebraska, I am writing to express my support for Faith Regional Health Services' (FRHS) pursuit of federal appropriations for Fiscal Year 2010. These funds will be used to support the development and expansion of electronic health record (EHR) technology efforts at FRHS and the critical access hospitals in Northeast Nebraska.

Although each of the hospitals in this area have made an effort to move toward an EHR, progress and implementation is very costly and the level of accomplishment varies widely from one hospital to another. We have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in this endeavor and we're not there yet. The cost to implement and integrate an EHR is staggering. The dollars from this appropriation would be used to get closer to the realization of the software/hardware needs for the "meaningful use" requirement set forth by President Obama.

This money would also help provide the hospitals with the most advanced medical technology and immediate access for our patients and physicians to medical history, test results and tele-assessments.

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 and specifically, our hospital, St. Francis Memorial Hospital, in West Point. We sincerely appreciate your support and consideration of this request and hope that you will consider this cause very worthy of federal funding.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Briggs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ronald O. Briggs
President/CEO