



Dear Senator Nelson,

I am writing in support of Southeast Nebraska Behavioral Health Information Network's (SNBHIN) request for earmarked funds. Your assignment of these funds would assist in the purchase of Electronic Health Record (EHR) software applications to more fully integrate the Health Information Exchange (HIE) system currently in development by SNBHIN.

I represent CenterPointe, a provider of behavioral health services in southeast Nebraska. We specialize in treating people who have both a mental illness and an addiction. An integrated health information exchange system will significantly improve our ability to treat the significant number of Nebraska citizens with dual diagnosis.

- CenterPointe's ability to coordinate health and behavioral health will improve with the EHR system's ability to manage chronic conditions. Our clinicians will be able to produce an electronic summary of care record for every transition in care. The electronic summary of care could be accessed by other primary and behavioral health care providers.
- Safety for the consumers CenterPointe serves will improve with easy access to up-to-date medical records which will promote evidence-based treatment decisions and provide quick access to essential information in emergency situations.
- Recent research demonstrates that people with mental illness die on average at age 51 as compared to age 76 among the general public. 3 out of 5 of these deaths were the result of mostly preventable medical conditions. We can reduce these disparate health outcomes through efficient sharing of behavioral health records with primary healthcare providers.

SNBHIN's leadership in the development of an HIE system has been aggressive and successful. Under their skilled coordination; National, state, and local funding sources have invested in the HIE system. But still more funds are needed.

We urge you to consider the requested earmark to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of the behavioral health system in Southeast Nebraska.

Working together with SNBHIN you can provide a roadmap for the adoption of an HIE system for all Nebraska and, most importantly, improve the quality of life for Nebraska citizens with behavioral health conditions.

Sincerely,



Tophér Hansen, JD
Executive Director