

Clarinda MHI

Letters of Support

October 12, 2009

October 9, 2009

Ro Foege, Chair Legislative Task Force
507 B Washington Ct.
P.O. Box 128
Mount Vernon, IA 52314-0128

Re: MHI Closure

Mr. Foege,

I would like to address some issues related to the possible closure of the MHI.

1. The economic impact of closure would of course affect a rural community which has experienced significant increase in unemployment due to major cut backs in four local manufacturing plants and closure of three others. Loss of over 100 jobs would severely increase the workforce in southwest Iowa. The MHI jobs are quality jobs-it is not likely that this level of employment would be replaced.
2. Loss of jobs for health professionals will impact other service programs. This area is recognized by HRSA as an area with a shortage of health care professionals. It is difficult for private agencies to recruit professionals to the area-existing staff at MHI supplement that shortage. Nurses moonlight or take part time work at local hospitals, therapists work or consult part time at community mental health centers and private agencies. The MHI also attracts young professionals to the community for first jobs or internships who put down roots and stay in the community, sometimes taking other jobs or sometimes working a lifetime in the MHI.
3. The task force is undoubtedly aware that southwest Iowa has the lowest income and population base of the four quadrants of the state. Likewise we have the fewest non public resources-greater distance to large hospitals and correspondingly greatest need for the state operated facilities. MHI plays a key role in the continuum of mental health services in southwest Iowa.
4. Local law enforcement would be greatly impacted by an increasing need to transport patients to another quadrant of the state. At the present time out of county trips result in overtime for deputies-increased transportation costs and having a deputy out of county creates a burden for the law enforcement agency.
5. MHI has developed a symbiotic relationship with four on campus entities- Corrections, Clarinda Academy, Zion Recovery Services and Waubonsie Mental Health Center. These collaborative relationships enhance cost efficiency. Shared services and staff allow for cross training and improved efficiency. The MHI is part of a multi-purpose campus. Removal of one program will impact cost and operations of the others.

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**Southwest
Iowa
Families
• CH**

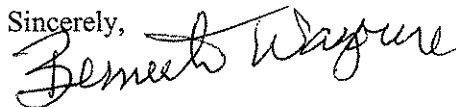
As a tax payer, I recognize the states current budgetary problems. I also recognize a need to be responsive to the needs of our people and progressive in the manner in which we deliver services. If the intent is to save money, wouldn't it make sense to close an entire institution? Clarinda MHI is an integral piece of the Clarinda Treatment Complex. It is not feasible to close the Clarinda Treatment Complex.

If we're concerned about access to resources-wouldn't it make sense to close one of the Eastern MHI's-since University of Iowa is nearby and could meet the need for services?

MHI Clarinda has been well maintained. The grounds have capacity to accept other programs or additional beds if necessary to meet the needs of the people of Iowa.

I am a mental health professional and have lived and worked in southwest Iowa most of my professional life. I know first hand the needs of the mental health community because I practice here. I do not believe that the best interests of Iowa would be served by closing the Clarinda MHI. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,



Berneeta Wagoner, LISW
Agency Director

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The City of Shenandoah

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October 6, 2009

To: The Mental Health Review Committee

I am writing this letter in support of the Mental Health Hospital located in Clarinda, Iowa. I believe that this hospital should remain open for the following reasons:

- 1.) I served in Law Enforcement for 30 years and have used this hospital many times. They do a good job and are also handy for all of Southwest Iowa.
- 2.) The kitchen at this hospital now serves the Clarinda Correctional Facility and the Clarinda Academy.

Please take into consideration the need to keep the hospital open in Clarinda.

Thank you,



Dick Hunt
Mayor, Shenandoah Iowa

Richard T. Anderson

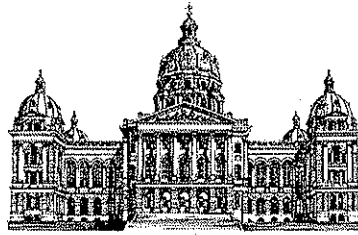
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Ninety-Seventh District

Statehouse: (515) 281-3221

e-mail:

richard.anderson@legis.state.ia.us



House of Representatives

State of Iowa

Eighty-Second General Assembly

STATEHOUSE

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

COMMITTEES

Judiciary - Ranking Member
Environmental Protection,
Economic Growth
International Relations

APPROPRIATION
SUBCOMMITTEE
Justice Systems

Local Office Address

101 E. Main Street

P.O. Box 157

Clarinda, IA 51632-0157

Tel: 712-542-2141

October 8, 2009

Mr Romaine Foege, Chair
Mental Health Institute Task Force
Iowa Department of Human Services
1305 E. Walnut Street
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Ro and Task Force Members:

I want to thank you for serving on this important task force. Caring for those who suffer with mental illness continues to be a sociological and medical challenge in our state. We must continue to labor in caring for these people. The value of their existence and their potential well being demands that we care.

Hospital or Prison? Enhance Mental Health Hospital Services

We long time residents of Clarinda remember the days when patients in the Clarinda mental hospital engaged in meaningful work: tending gardens, milking cows, planting and harvesting crops. This was therapeutic care with real meaning. The hospitals were self sufficient. Then we nearly emptied our mental hospitals rightfully believing many could be better served in our communities. Now, however, similar individuals sit idly in prison beds, lifting weights and walking in circles in the prison yard. This is neither therapeutic nor meaningful. It is sad. It is wrong.

We live under a myth that we have de-institutionalized those who suffer with mental illness. What we have ended up with is significant prison overcrowding. These people, who cannot live in the community, should be in a hospital, not in a prison. We should be enhancing our mental hospitals not closing them.

Clarinda's Cost Effective Symbiotic Facility - Closure of Any Jeopardizes All.

Here, at the Clarinda Treatment Complex, is a dynamic public-private partnership. There is a symbiotic relationship here between the main entities on campus: the Clarinda Academy, the mental health hospital, and the prison. These different programs share many services (kitchen, maintenance, housekeeping, administration) which results in cost effective delivery of services for them all. Closure of any - jeopardizes all. Sound analysis will likely show that any savings resulting from closure will be offset by higher expenses for the other state and private providers.

Savings Proposals at the Expense of the Needy - Beware!

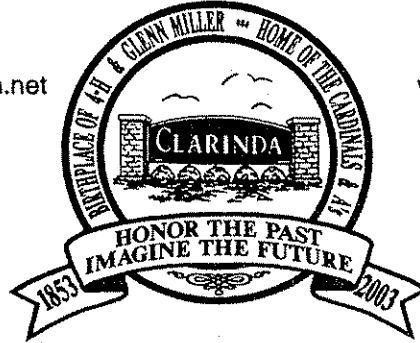
After three years of excessive spending, the legislature is in a desperate attempt to find scarce dollars. The idea of balancing the budget on the backs of the needy and mentally ill is not new. We know intuitively this is wrong. Our cultural values cry out. We must reject this. We must protect the needy individuals in our culture. Cut non-essential services and waste, but not hospital services for those who are among those needy. Beware of this legislative proposal.

Sincerely,

Richard T. Anderson

CITY OF CLARINDA

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October 8, 2009

Mr. Romaine Foege, Chairman
Mental Health Institute Task Force
Department of Human Services
1305 East Walnut Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Mr. Foege and Task Force Members,

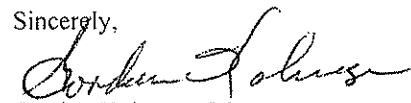
On behalf of the City of Clarinda, we would like to extend our support for the continuation of services at the Clarinda Mental Health Institute (MHI). The Clarinda MHI is the facility in the State of Iowa with the lowest cost of hospitalization stay. The main reason for the lowest cost is the sharing of services between the Clarinda MHI, Department of Corrections facility, and the Clarinda Academy.

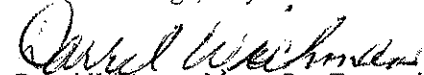
The Clarinda MHI facility excels in quality patient care and has been awarded a 5 star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for the Geropsychiatric program. The facility also receives excellent satisfaction surveys from patients and families.

The Clarinda MHI staff also provide services to the Waubonsie Mental Health Center, area community colleges, area alcohol assistance agencies, local schools, local community hospital, and local businesses. Area colleges use the Clarinda MHI for part of their psychiatric training in their nursing programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our input regarding the Clarinda Mental Health Institute. We appreciate your consideration and research in reviewing the data collected during this process.

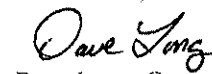
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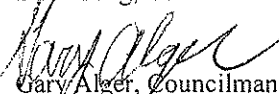

Gordon Kokenge, Mayor


Darrel Wichman, Mayor Pro-Tem and Councilman


Bill McComb, Councilman


Jeff McCall, Councilman


Dave Long, Councilman


Gary Alger, Councilman

10-8-09

Don Reasoner
Clarke Co Supervisor
100 S. MAIN Escala, Ia 50213

Subject: Clarinda Complex

Whereas I am The Clarke County
Representative to The Citizens Advisory Board
we request The Clarinda Complex Remain open
This complex has proven many times to
be one of The most efficient, well managed
complexes in our state.

our county is experiencing many problems
as The state is, in these troubling times it is very
difficult to determine where to cut expenses.

we are aware cutting services proves to
be more costly on a long term basis but
that is decisions that have to be made
in the near future.

we are very satisfied with The
Clarinda Complex and believe it must
Remain open.

Don Reasoner
Clarke County
Supervisor

CLARINDA

Chamber of Commerce

Clarinda Chamber of Commerce

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chamber@clarinda.org

October 6, 2009

Mr. Romaine Foege, Chairman
Mental Health Institute Task Force
Department of Human Services
1305 East Walnut Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Mr. Foege and Task Force Members,

On behalf of the Clarinda Chamber of Commerce organization, I would like to extend my support for the continuation of services at the Clarinda Mental Health Institute (MHI). Clarinda has been a leader in negotiating public/private partnerships. Our innovations in contract negotiating have been replicated at Cherokee, Glenwood and Woodward and also in the field of corrections statewide. We take great pride in being the facility with the lowest cost of hospitalization stay.

The Clarinda MHI is a regional Psychiatric Center and also a Geropsychiatric Resource Center for the entire State of Iowa. As the number of the elderly in Iowa has increased, so has the need and demand for programs that can take care of those who are psychiatrically unmanageable in the nursing home and often physically ill or disabled. Our program provides those needed services. The Clarinda MHI facility continues to excel in quality patient care and has been awarded from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services the Geropsychiatric program a 5 star rating. The facility routinely receives excellent satisfaction surveys from patients and families.

The staff also provides services to the Clarinda Academy, Waubonsie Mental Health Center, area community colleges, area alcohol assistance agencies, our local schools, community hospital and businesses. Programs in several area colleges, particularly nurses training, use the Clarinda MHI for part of their psychiatric training.

In the State of Iowa, the condition of the Clarinda physical plant and quality of environment are unmatched. Recent renovations have been economically feasible because of inexpensive inmate labor provided by our campus Department of Corrections facility (inmates). The Clarinda MHI has been exceptionally successful diversifying the use of the campus. In 1991 only 7 of the 18 living units were occupied. Today 17 of 18 living units are occupied. The remaining living unit is currently being explored for women substance abuse treatment.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our input regarding the Clarinda Mental Health Institute. We appreciate your consideration and research in reviewing the data collected during this process.

Sincerely,



Elaine Farwell
Executive Director