

**Additional  
Letters of Support  
Cherokee MHI**

**October 9, 2009**

OFFICE OF  
SIOUX COUNTY AUDITOR

---

Lois Huitink  
County Auditor & Commissioner of  
Elections

Linda Feikema  
Deputy Auditor/Real Estate



Lisa Rowenhorst  
Election Administrator  
Kim Dykstra  
Budget Director  
Beth Vander Veen  
Payroll/Accounting  
Linda Wynia  
Accounting/Real Estate

September 23, 2009

Dr. Daniel Gillette  
1251 West Cedar Loop  
Cherokee, IA 51012

Dear Dr. Gillette,

I am writing on behalf of the Sioux County Board of Supervisors to encourage you in your efforts to retain Mental Health services at the Cherokee Mental Health Institute. Two members of the Sioux County Board of Supervisors attended the meeting held by the State task force to evaluate the necessity of eliminating one of Iowa's Mental Health institutes. They were impressed by the input given to the task force by citizens attending the meeting.

The Board appreciates the services that the institute provides to the citizens of Sioux County and realizes the importance of having this facility in the Northwest corner of Iowa. If the facility were to close, clients and their families would be faced with traveling much greater distances to receive the care that they require.

In addition to the added stress placed on family members, the Board is also concerned about other mental health care providers in the region should the Cherokee Mental Health Institute be closed. In particular the YES Center has expressed concern about continuing to provide services to youth in the region. The YES Center depends on the Mental Health Institute for staff support and meals.

Once again, the Board of Supervisors of Sioux County wishes to convey their appreciation to you, the staff, and the Cherokee Mental Health Institute. They look forward to many more years of working with you in providing quality mental health care to the citizens of Northwest Iowa.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lois Huitink".

Lois Huitink  
Clerk, Sioux County Board of Supervisors



# Osceola Community Hospital

*"The Hospital With A Heart"*

Ninth Avenue North, PO Box 258, Sibley, Iowa 51249-0258  
Phone 712-754-2574 • Toll Free 800-859-1419 • FAX 712-754-3782

**Osceola  
Community  
Health Services**

115 Cedar Lane  
Sibley, Iowa 51249  
712-754-4611

**bright  
Beginnings of  
Osceola County**

921 1st Street NE  
Sibley, Iowa 51249  
712-754-2166

**OCH  
Wellness/Rehab**

Ninth Avenue North  
Sibley, Iowa 51249  
712-754-9260

**Heartwood  
Heights**

Ninth Avenue North  
Sibley, Iowa 51249  
712-754-3009

September 10, 2009

Dan Gillette, M.D., MHCM, FAPA, FACHE  
Superintendent, Cherokee Mental Health Institute

Dear Dr. Gillette,

I am the Director of Nursing from the Osceola Community Hospital in Sibley, IA. I am writing to voice my support in keeping Cherokee MHI open.

We depend very much on the mental health care we receive from Cherokee MHI in northwest Iowa. In our area there are few mental health beds and to have even less would be a huge loss. It is critical for our patients to receive prompt and quality mental health care and we feel they have that at Cherokee. The other MHI are far from northwest Iowa and would be hard to transfer our patients so far from home.

Please keep Cherokee MHI open and allow them to give the care to our patients.

Sincerely,

Julie Schroder, RN, DON

Ro Foege, MHI Task Force

9 - 20 - 09

Dear Mr. Foege:

I am writing to you about the likely closing of one of the mental health institutes in Iowa. I want to strongly support the continued services of the Cherokee Mental Health Institute.

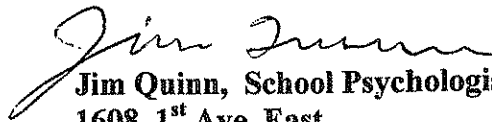
I recall that you worked as a School Social Worker for an Area Education Agency in the Cedar Rapids area of Iowa. My own background is that I worked as a School Psychologist for a northwest Iowa Area Education Agency for 30 years, working mainly in the Spencer and Okoboji area. Following that, I worked for 3 more years employed as an Educational Psychologist with University of Iowa Child Health Specialty Clinics in Spencer and Mason City.

These experiences working with many children with emotional/behavioral problems convinced me that the Cherokee Mental Health Institute is an absolutely essential service provider for mental health treatment. In Spencer, for example, if a child needed to be hospitalized the only alternative to Cherokee was to go out of state to Sioux Falls, which was always problematic in terms of payment for services. I frankly know of no western Iowa alternative to Cherokee in serving the needs of children needing hospitalization. The outpatient evaluations and services from Cherokee MHI were also valuable and much appreciated.

If you look at a county map listing the number of psychiatrists in Iowa, you will also see a whole lot of blank areas in western Iowa, except for Cherokee MHI. Western Iowa is an area of the state where service providers for childrens' mental health, as well as adult mental health, are very few and far between in comparison to central and eastern Iowa. I believe it would create a lot of gaps in services and family disruptions with long travel times and separations if Cherokee MHI did not continue to serve both children and adults in the western Iowa area.

Mental health needs of children and adults in western Iowa would be very poorly served if Cherokee MHI was closed. Speaking as one who frequently saw the use and the necessity of services from Cherokee MHI, I sincerely hope that you will support the continued services of the Cherokee Mental Health Institute during these difficult budget times.

Sincerely,

  
Jim Quinn, School Psychologist (retired)  
1608 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. East  
Spencer, Iowa 51301

Hi Sue, Hi Mark,

I will say something like this during the public forum in the auditorium at CMHI this afternoon.

Doctor Gillette and Members of the Task Force,

I was born and raised in Cherokee. I was employed at the Cherokee Mental Health Institute for almost 30 years and I retired in March 2002.

During the 1970s my job as a Psychiatric Social Worker and Alcoholism Counselor included work at CMHI with patients and their families and friends, and also included work out in the counties of Northwest Iowa with social workers, nurses, psychiatrists, and with administrators of mental health centers, nursing homes, county homes and halfway houses which were the early version of residential care facilities. We worked together to improve our communications and to develop resources in the communities to help our patients when they returned to the communities. I experienced a sense of teamwork among the CMHI social workers and the workers out in the communities of Northwest Iowa. It was clear to us that our patients occasionally needed inpatient psychiatric treatment and follow up outpatient psychiatric treatment and supportive services in the community.

In 1976 I left my employment at CMHI for graduate education and other employment before returning to CMHI in the early 1980s.

During the final seven years of my employment at CMHI I again worked as a Psychiatric Social Worker and got the opportunity to see differences and similarities in my job as compared to twenty years earlier. Differences were mostly a quickened pace of work to get more done sooner. Similarities were the ongoing sense of teamwork among the CMHI social workers and the workers out in the communities of Northwest Iowa. We still knew we needed each other, and we diligently worked together to provide resources needed by our patients so they would cope well in the community.

Now, in September 2009 I believe the people of Northwest Iowa still need the mental health diagnostic, treatment and aftercare planning resources provided by the staff of the Cherokee Mental Health Institute in cooperation with mental health professionals in the counties of Northwest Iowa.

The people of Northwest Iowa still need the services of the Cherokee Mental Health Institute. It should definitely remain open to meet their needs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jim Adamson  
200 North 6th St., Apt. 11  
Cherokee, IA 51012  
712-229-9502 (Cell)  
[jpa91843@q.com](mailto:jpa91843@q.com)

September 14, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written in support of the continuation of services offered by the Mental Health Institute of Cherokee.

My employment at the Mental Health Institute began in 1959 when the hospital had approximately 1250 patients. Due to diligent efforts over the next few years, the population was greatly reduced. With this reduction and with a major increase in professional staff, the hospital was able to develop a first class treatment program and, at the same time, the hospital was training future psychiatrists as well as students in other disciplines.

Several years ago, a national publication called the hospital a "mental health oasis in the middle of a cornfield". This is a description that I believe is still apt.

Although I have been away from the hospital for a number of years, I have kept in close contact with hospital staff and have tried to stay aware of any changes in its operation.

The hospital has a catchment area of 40 counties and with the exception of three counties the area is predominantly rural. In all of these counties, there has been and continues to be a critical shortage of mental health personnel, especially psychiatrists. This shortage is very likely to continue in the future.

These counties are only able to provide minimal services to people in need of help. Of all the reasons to keep the hospital operating is that it is the only resource in the area that offers a comprehensive treatment program for children, adolescents, and the severely mentally ill adult. The loss of these specialized services would be a drastic blow to the people in this area.

Finally, in my professional and personal opinion, the continued operation of the hospital is an absolute necessity if we wish to provide quality mental health services to our citizens in need of such help.

Sincerely,

James W. Haritage

September 15, 2009

Dear Persons of the Cherokee Closure Task Force.

I am writing as both a citizen of the state of Iowa and a nurse with many years experience in various areas of nursing. As I contemplate the change that a closure at Cherokee will have on many people it causes me great concern. As I will list:

1. For this NW Iowa area, Cherokee has been the longstanding secure facility of choice for many families with a loved one with mental illness. Much of this is due to the lack of insurance coverage for mental illness and therefore Cherokee is the choice. Nevertheless, the care that is received here is beneficial to all who enter as evidenced by its long history and reputation of fine care.
2. There are areas of this state in which the words "mental illness" are only whispered, to then remove people from their support systems and families may be of more harm than good as this could place further stigma on the mental illness.
3. The care and concern found at Cherokee is something that we in this area of the state can be proud. It is a fine facility with people who enjoy their work and truly want to help the people they serve. A case in point, last spring I observed three ladies removing wax from a floor in the PRP area. They were laughing and visiting as they worked in the heat of the spring with wax that wasn't coming off the way it should. They did not want to apply a new layer of wax until all the old was stripped so the floor looked nice. Caring for others, you bet!

I heartily support the continuance of Cherokee MHI to serve the people of this area.

Thank you,

Linda J. Ver Steeg MSN, RN  
Nursing Instructor  
Northwestern College  
Orange City, IA 51041

September 13, 2009

To the Iowa Task Force:

As an adjunct Mental Health instructor for the Nursing Program at Iowa Lakes Community College I am opposed the proposed closure of the Cherokee Mental Health Institute. Nursing students are required by the Iowa Board of Nursing to not only take classes in Mental Health nursing but to have clinical experiences in Mental Health facilities. The facilities for this type of education are currently limited throughout the state of Iowa. Closure of the Mental Health Institute in Cherokee would severely jeopardize the education of future nurses in northwest Iowa.

Cherokee Mental Health Institute provides quality care to individuals with psychiatric and emotional needs. Many individuals lives have been greatly changed through the treatment and follow-up received at the Institute. The citizens of Iowa need and deserve this type of quality of mental health care.

As a resident of Dickinson County I am well aware of the limited Mental Health facilities in our area. If the Cherokee Mental Institute were to close where would these patients receive care? I would hate to think the citizens of Iowa would allow the Institute to close without specific plans for alternate care.

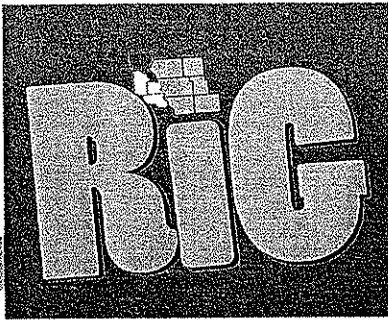
Please consider what is in the best interest for the mental health of the people in northwest Iowa.

Sincerely,



Mary C. Gengerke, RN, BSN, MEd  
Adjunct Instructor  
Iowa Lakes Community College

Enclosures



City of Akron, Cherokee Area Economic Development Corporation, Dakota Dunes Community Improvement District, Iowa State University Extension, Ida County Economic Development Corporation, Iowa Region XII Workforce Investment Board, Iowa Workforce Development, Le Mars Area Chamber of Commerce, Monona County Economic Development Partnership for Growth, Manpower Incorporated, Northeast Community College, City of North Sioux City, North Sioux City Economic Development Corporation, City of Sioux City, Siouland Chamber of Commerce, The Siouland Initiative, Siouland Economic Development Corporation, Siouland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council, City of South Sioux City, South Sioux City Chamber of Commerce, Tri-State Graduate Center, Tyson Fresh Meats, Western Iowa Tech Community College

## Tri-State Siouland Regional Innovation Project

September 15, 2009

Romain Foege  
Chair  
Mental Health Task Force  
Iowa Department of Human Services  
Hoover State Office Building  
1305 E. Walnut Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Chairman Foege:

As the Regional Workforce Innovation Director for the Siouland Tri-State Regional Innovation Project and a fellow social worker, I urge you to carefully consider a number of different factors as you and the Mental Health Task Force determine the fate of the state's Mental Health Institutes.

While there have been many advances in mental health care over the years, there is still a need for intensive services for some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Because western Iowa has a less dense population than eastern Iowa, it may seem more palatable to close a facility on this side of the state. But please also take distance into consideration. Cherokee Mental Health Institute (CMHI) currently serves adults from 41 counties and children from 55 counties (over one-half of the state geographically). Locally provided mental health services are extremely important for a consumer's treatment plan. Increasing the distance to a Mental Health Institute (MHI) will only make it more difficult for consumers' families, particularly child and adolescent consumers, to be active partners in treatment plans. Longer drives for families' and other support systems will mean even greater disruptions and likely more time off work.

Distance to the nearest MHI will also impact local law enforcement agencies. The greater the distance to a MHI, the more time and resources will be used for transporting consumers to appropriate treatment facilities rather than policing the community.

CHMI is the fourth largest employer in the Cherokee area. Closing CMHI would leave a noticeable gap in the local economy. Because of the specialized nature of the work done at CMHI, it is not difficult to imagine that many of the workers would have to leave the area to obtain similar employment at a comparable pay scale.

Excellent mental health services are a critical component to a healthy workforce and a vibrant community. CHMI is a welcome partner in the Cherokee area and the entire region, providing both

much needed professional services and much desired professional jobs. Please recommend that CMHI continue to provide services for our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Rathman MSW". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Denise Rathman, MSW  
Regional Workforce Innovation Director

cc: Mark Buschkamp, Executive Director, Cherokee Area Economic Development Corporation

September 8, 2009

**Sac County Supervisors  
Sac County Courthouse  
Sac City, Iowa 50583**

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: MHI Task Force for 811 House File Bill

We are writing to you to express our deep concern regarding the closing of one of our states Mental Health Hospitals. More specifically, we are concerned about the possible closing of the Cherokee Mental Health Hospital. In a rural area of the state such as ours, we find our resources to be quite limited. Because we must operate with so few resources in this area of the state, it would be devastating in many ways to eliminate the valuable asset of the Cherokee Mental Health Hospital.

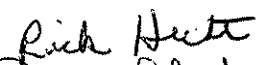

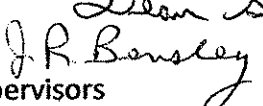
When a person presents with a mental health crisis, the last thing the individual wants or needs is to be faced with a three hour, or more, car ride with strangers. Having a local, easily accessible, MHI can be an important step toward a faster recovery. Families are often a very important part of recovery. If family is forced to travel over three hours to participate in an individual's recovery, this could significantly restrict this valuable piece of healing. Another point to consider is local doctors having a better understanding of local issues that could contribute to patients' mental health.

Yet another point is the already strained availability of psychiatrists in rural areas.

If the Cherokee MHI were to close, our small rural county will be facing higher costs at other state mental hospitals, we would also be facing significantly higher transportation costs, increased number of meals for staff transporting and patients. There would also be notably increased travel time and expense for our mental health advocate and or county social worker.

Please take the time to consider the hardship the closing of Cherokee Mental Health Hospital will place on Sac County mental health patients, as well as, local counties with already vulnerable mental health budgets and minimal available resources. We appreciate your time and hope this letter will assist in helping the task force make the right decision regarding the closing of one of Iowa's Mental Health Hospitals.

Sincerely,

Rick Hecht, BOS Chair   
Dean Stock   
Jack Bensley   
Sac County Supervisors

CC: Sac County CPC

September 15, 2009

Dan Gillette, MD, MHCM, FAPA, FACHE  
Superintendent  
Cherokee Mental Health Institute  
1200 W. Cedar Loop  
Cherokee, IA 51012

Dear Dr. Gillette,

I am writing this letter to offer my support of the services provided at the Cherokee Mental Health Institute (CMHI). The CMHI not only provides valuable services to those in need of mental health care but it also is extremely important in the educational preparation of future health care providers, especially nurses.

First, I want to extend my support of the services that you provide to members of society who are in need of mental health care. Before going into nursing education, I was the supervisor of the emergency department at St. Luke's Regional Medical Center in Sioux City. We referred numerous patients to the CMHI who would have had no where else to go for mental health services. The CMHI is a valuable resource for patients and health care providers. The care provided is exceptional.

Second, I want to stress the importance of another service the CMHI provides and that is the education of future health care providers and, in particular, nurses. Nursing programs across the country are struggling to provide good mental health clinical experiences for their students in prelicensure programs. The CMHI has provided mental health clinical experiences for nursing students for many years. I have colleagues who talk about their experiences back in the 1950's. The nursing faculty at Briar Cliff University has been extremely fortunate to have the CMHI available for our students' mental health clinical experiences. Our students learn the best practices for mental health care from your dedicated staff of professionals.

The closure of the Cherokee Mental Health Institute would have a huge negative impact on the availability of mental health services in northwest Iowa, on health care education, and on the economy in general. You have my support as well as that of the entire nursing faculty at Briar Cliff University.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Petersen, EdD, MSN, RN, CNE  
Chair and Associate Professor  
MSN Program Director

Department of Nursing

September 8, 2009

Dan Gillette, MD, MHCM, FAPA, FACHE  
Superintendent,  
Cherokee Mental Health Institute  
1200 W Cedar Loop  
Cherokee, IA 51012

Dear Dr. Gillette,

I am writing this letter to offer my support of continuation of services at Cherokee Mental Health Institute. Cherokee Mental Health Institute (CMHI) has been a clinical site for Briar Cliff University for many years. For the past five years I have been the clinical instructor for our senior nursing students at your facility. In those five years I have become acquainted with your staff and also with the clients of the facility.

I believe that Cherokee Mental Health Institute has a unique and effective program. Many of our students have commented on the care and concern that the staff show for the in-patient population at CMHI. They are impressed with the classes and programs they attend and consider this clinical rotation a great learning experience.

Cherokee Mental Health Institute has been a provider of quality care in this western region of Iowa for many years. The facility provides superior quality care and treatment. Their child/adolescent program is invaluable in providing necessary care for children in need. There is no other program like it in Iowa.

Finally, I must point out that CMHI has been a center of learning for generations of health care professionals. I have students today who say that their parents trained at CMHI, indeed, I did my mental health rotation at your facility in 1986. Your facility and staff have provided guidance and training for countless students who have gone on to provide compassionate, quality care.

It would be tragic to lose such a vital part of our health care system, our economy and our education system. You have my full support.

Sincerely,



Mary K. Nissen, MSN, ARNP-BC, COHN-S



1525 West Fifth Street P.O. Box 309 Storm Lake, Iowa 50588  
Ph. 712.732.4030 Fax 712.732.4034 www.bvrmc.org

September 10, 2009

## Mental Health Center Task Force Members

We are writing in regard to the upcoming decision concerning the closing of one of the four state facilities offering mental health services. We would like to voice our strong support for the services currently being provided to residents of northwest Iowa by the Cherokee Mental Health Institute.

As you are most likely aware, many patients access mental health care services through emergency rooms across the state. In accordance with EMTALA regulations, hospitals have the responsibility to provide care for these individuals or find a facility that is appropriate to meet their needs.

Buena Vista Regional Medical Center, in providing services to the 20,000 residents of this county, is often required to seek the specialty services that CMHI offers. Often, the process is time consuming and with fewer facilities available to accept a transfer, the potential for patients to be placed in facilities poorly equipped to provide them with the appropriate care or not to be placed at all, increases. If CMHI is forced to close and we are able to secure an admission for our patients, we will be looking at long transfer times which will burden the EMS system, removing them from our facility and county for long periods of time and at considerable additional cost. The logistical barriers created would also put undo burden on families and potentially impact the valuable role they play in the support and recovery of their loved one.

Our goal is to assist our patients in finding the proper care for their health needs. Failure to do so could result in a tragedy similar to the one that occurred in Parkersburg, Iowa earlier this year.

The Cherokee Mental Health Institute has proven to be a professional, well structured, fiscally responsible organization as evidenced by their length of stay, documented outcomes, low readmission rates and accreditation from the Joint Commission.

The inpatient and outpatient psychiatric services for adults, children and adolescents at CMHI are an invaluable resource in northwest Iowa, an area already underserved by psychiatric professionals.

On behalf of the hospital, medical staff and more than 60 patients for whom we sought services last year, we urge you to keep the Cherokee Mental Health Institute open and serving the citizens of Northwest Iowa.

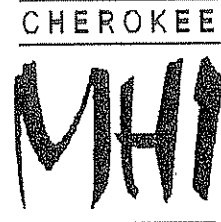
Sincerely,

Todd Hudspeth  
Chief Executive Officer

Roy Grant, MD  
Medical Staff President

WELCOME

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL  
MEETING  
September 15, 2009



"Treatment, Training  
& Advocacy"

Thank you for attending the informational meeting today to show your support for the Cherokee Mental Health Institute and your community. Your support is appreciated and valued. Please take a few moments to express your suggestions, comments and the impact on the community if the Cherokee hospital were to close. Again, thank you for attending today. If you wish to address the task force committee during the meeting, please inform the staff at the sign-in tables.

To Task Force Committee:

*This hospital should definitely stay open.*  
*The City of Cherokee needs the industry!*

Name

WELCOME

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL  
MEETING  
September 15, 2009

CHEROKEE



"Treatment, Training  
& Advocacy"

Thank you for attending the informational meeting today to show your support for the Cherokee Mental Health Institute and your community. Your support is appreciated and valued. Please take a few moments to express your suggestions, comments and the impact on the community if the Cherokee hospital were to close. Again, thank you for attending today. If you wish to address the task force committee during the meeting, please inform the staff at the sign-in tables.

To Task Force Committee:

Why if this facility meets its budget and the others over why is this facility considered? I know the Palatkaian assessment of Eastern Iowa but Northern Iowa certainly has a concern. Patients shouldn't be involved.

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
Name

# WELCOME

## PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING September 15, 2009

CHEROKEE



"Treatment, Training  
& Advocacy"

Thank you for attending the informational meeting today to show your support for the Cherokee Mental Health Institute and your community. Your support is appreciated and valued. Please take a few moments to express your suggestions, comments and the impact on the community if the Cherokee hospital were to close. Again, thank you for attending today. If you wish to address the task force committee during the meeting, please inform the staff at the sign-in tables.

To Task Force Committee:

Brian Cliff in a whole is a great supporter of this facility. Students depend on this facility as an area to do the vast majority of their mental health clinical rotations.

Also the facility in a whole is essential to the surrounding area for the services utilized. Without this facility patients would have to travel a minimum of 4 hrs.

Please keep this open

Anonymous

Name

WELCOME

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL  
MEETING  
September 15, 2009

CHEROKEE



"Treatment, Training  
& Advocacy"

Thank you for attending the informational meeting today to show your support for the Cherokee Mental Health Institute and your community. Your support is appreciated and valued. Please take a few moments to express your suggestions, comments and the impact on the community if the Cherokee hospital were to close. Again, thank you for attending today. If you wish to address the task force committee during the meeting, please inform the staff at the sign-in tables.

To Task Force Committee:

We want you to know that we think this is a fine facility and we have had a personal contact here and it was a very good experience and very professional.

Tommy Blumrich  
Linda Stewart

Name

WELCOME

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL  
MEETING  
September 15, 2009

CHEROKEE



"Treatment, Training  
& Advocacy"

Thank you for attending the informational meeting today to show your support for the Cherokee Mental Health Institute and your community. Your support is appreciated and valued. Please take a few moments to express your suggestions, comments and the impact on the community if the Cherokee hospital were to close. Again, thank you for attending today. If you wish to address the task force committee during the meeting, please inform the staff at the sign-in tables.

To Task Force Committee:

To close this need facility is very short sight. To eliminate health care for Northwest Iowa is to compromise many peoples Mental & Social Health as well as a Negative economic impact to this side of the state. This is not forward thinking. Lowest per diem & Low recidivism = A healthier Iowa!

Steve McGroary  
Name

September 28, 2009

Dr. Dan Gillette  
Cherokee Mental Health Institute  
1251 West Cedar Loop  
Cherokee, IA 51012

Dear Dr. Gillette,

Mercy Medical Center in Sioux City would like to add its voice to the group of Northwest Iowa health care providers who support the great work being done at the Cherokee Mental Health Institute (MHI).

As the largest hospital in Northwest Iowa and the area's Level-II Trauma Center, Mercy sees a wide-range of patients from across the region. The number of patients with behavioral health issues constitutes a growing percentage of those patients.

Mercy's goal in the delivery of behavioral health is to stabilize, treat and transfer those patients who need a different level of care than that which we provide. Those transfers, numbering in the hundreds every years, are made to the Cherokee MHI.

The closure of the Cherokee MHI would be a critical mistake. If Mercy no longer had Cherokee as an option, we would have to transfer patients to Clarinda. That is both unfriendly to the patient and to their families who reside in Northwest Iowa.

Mercy would encourage the State of Iowa and the Department of Human Services to abandon their proposal to reduce their commitment to behavioral health. The focus should be on finding ways to increase the number of mental health care providers in the state, particularly psychiatrists. Any closure of Cherokee would exacerbate a situation that is already at a critical stage.



Mercy Medical Center in Sioux City values its relationship with the Cherokee MHI. They have been a valued partner and we would encourage the state to maintain the services it currently provides.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mari Kaptain-Dahlen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mari Kaptain-Dahlen  
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer  
Mercy Medical Center – Sioux City

cc: Senator Ron Wieck  
Senator Steve Warnstadt  
Representative Christopher Rants  
Representative Roger Wendt  
Representative Wes Whitehead