

March 29, 2007

Senator Joel Johnson  
PO Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509

RE: Support for LB 616

Dear Senator Johnson:

Nebraska Advocacy Services, Inc., The Center for Disability Rights, Law, and Advocacy is the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for Nebraskans with disabilities. We support LB 616 as currently written.

Nebraska Advocacy Services, Inc. recognizes the inherent conflict of interest when allowing the regional behavioral health authorities to both administer behavioral health funds and provide direct services. We support LB 616's elimination of the grandfathering provision in the Behavioral Health Services Act that allows this conflict of interest to continue. We also recognize that there may be instances where no willing or qualified service provider exists to provide services. In this case, it is reasonable to allow the regional behavioral health authorities to provide services, as the lack of available services is a greater disservice to the persons with disabilities who need services than the outstanding conflict of interest. However, as soon as there becomes available a willing provider for services in the region, the Regional Behavioral Health Authority should discontinue providing that service and allow the willing provider to provide that service.

Sincerely,

Eric Evans  
Deputy Executive Director  
Nebraska Advocacy Services, Inc.

EAE/BAM/jrm

Cc: Sen. Gay; Sen. Erdman; Sen. Hansen; Sen. Howard; Sen. Pankonin; Sen. Stuthman