March 15, 2019

Please accept this letter as written comments **opposed** to HSB 246 which proposes to move Federal Mental Health block grant funds away from Community Mental Health Centers, and instead direct those funds to the MHDS Regions.

The Abbe Center is a Community Mental Health Center that serves over 12,000 individuals over an 8-county area in east central Iowa. We employ 185 staff that provide a comprehensive array of mental health services including clinic services such as Psychiatry and Therapy, and a wide range of community-based services including evidenced based practices such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), Intensive Psychiatric Rehabilitation (IPR), Habilitation services and home-based nursing. Currently, about 82% of the individuals we serve have Medicaid.

Using the federal block grant dollars, we have been able to train our staff and implement valuable “evidenced-based services” which demonstrate better outcomes. These include:

* First Episode Psychosis Recovery Support
* Same Day Access – improving timely access to care
* Peer Recovery Centers
* Consultation to Children Support Team
* Mental Health First Aid
* Youth Mental Health First Aid
* Parent-Child Interactive Therapy (P-CIT)
* Adlerian Play Therapy
* Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
* Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) for adults and for teens
* Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
* Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR)
* STEPPS for adults and for adolescents

At a Federal level, SAMHSA has created new criteria to establish a higher standard for agencies wanting to become a “Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic” (CCBHC). Abbe Center used federal block grant dollars to implement a self-assessment process and work towards being able to meet this high-level criterion. The work done under that state block grant deliverable is what allowed us to be a successful bidder to become a federal CCBHC grantee. That would not have happened without the support of the federal BG funds.

In summary, the federal block grant funds are currently being used to move the CMHC system towards evidenced based work. Without these funds, we would take giant steps backwards in our service delivery system. As non-profit organizations, we depend on those funds to help us create a comprehensive array of high-quality, evidenced-based services that demonstrate good outcomes.

Thank you. Kathy Johnson, Executive Director