

To whom it may concern:

My name is Julie Herny and I am the mother of two children that benefit tremendously from IHH programing in the state of Iowa. My daughter is 10 and was diagnosed on the autism spectrum when she was 4. My son is 7 and has generalized anxiety. For many years when my daughter was younger I struggled a great deal to navigate the mental health system in the state of Iowa to receive the support and services that my daughter desperately needed. I felt alone and without assistance from our primary care provider. It was not a lack of trying on their part, they are a wonderful office and they provide exceptional care. The problem was that they did not know anything about the kind of services my child needed for her neurological condition. Nobody knew what to recommend and I pieced it together in a grueling and rather tragic manner, all by myself. My own physical and mental wellbeing suffered as I struggled to locate therapy, services, school assistance, and programming for my daughter. I could not work full time, as piecing this puzzle together WAS a full time job.

My daughter continued to grow and the struggles seemed to become fewer. She enrolled with the IHH program, Pediatric Integrated Health, at Tanager Place. They helped our family find social skills groups and were there to listen. When we struggled from time to time to make ends meet they provided resources to our family and empowered us to locate and access service providers we did not know about in our community.

Most importantly, when tragedy struck within my little family, the care team that our IHH provided lifted us up and connected us in a way that I have not found through any other agency. See, my son suddenly began struggling with maintaining safe interactions at school. He was suddenly infinitely harder to manage than my autistic daughter. The care team stepped right in and streamlined care for my son by referring him to a therapist and setting up BHIS for him. They also listened to my struggles, validated my feelings, held me accountable, and followed up to be certain that my children were continuing with services that will lead to them being independent, functional adults instead of individuals in the system.

This is just one story of success; one piece of evidence indicating that my children have benefited immensely from the invaluable services provided through our integrated health home. I bring it to you today as a single mother, able to work full time, with two very challenging children. That said, I also present my story as a mother that very well could be displaced, unemployed, hungry, and without the ability to properly support my children without the empowerment, resources, encouragement, support and referrals provided by Tanager PIH; it has been a gigantic support in our success story.

Thank you kindly for reading my story today. I sincerely hope you take into consideration as you move forward.

Julie Herny