

# Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc.

*"Improving lives through quality, innovative mental health services"*

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December 14, 2017

Legislative Health Policy Oversight Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts with the Committee and your oversight of the healthcare system in Iowa.

My name is Tom Eachus and I am the Executive Director of UnityPoint Health Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center located in Waterloo, Iowa. I am writing to express our concerns to the new practice of allowing the Managed Care Organizations to "manage" those adult members with Serious Mental Illnesses and youth with Serious Emotional Disturbances who have been enrolled in our Integrated Health Home Program.

We have been providing Integrated Health Home services since April 2014 and have over 1,000 Medicaid clients enrolled in this program. The recent changes will result in over 200 of those individuals no longer being served by this program by January 1<sup>st</sup>.

One of the reasons Integrated Health Home Programs were implemented, primarily with Community Mental Health Centers, is because we have traditionally served the disproportionate share of Medicaid clients with behavioral health conditions **and** because of our history of serving clients **in the community**. Our Integrated Health Home services are provided in client homes, in medical offices, in hospitals, etc. where clients work, live and socialize. Our model of providing services is an active, vibrant, hands on approach to helping clients manage the physical and behavioral conditions they have that impact the costs of services. Our program, and other Integrated Health Home Programs across the State, have achieved remarkable outcomes for individual patients and families while saving precious health care dollars through:

- Reduced visits to Emergency Departments
- Reduced admissions to hospitals, especially Mental Health Units
- Improved health outcomes, e.g. lower A1C's, reduced use of medication(s) to treat chronic health conditions, etc.
- Improved functioning (physically and emotionally) in the community

There is the erroneous belief that the MCO model of care or Chronic Medical or Health Homes in the State can manage this population. We believe this is not true. These medical homes while a valuable part of our service delivery system do not provide the level or frequency of services that we provide to this population.

The implications of the new approach will simply be the opposite of the items listed above. Patients will go without services, visits to Emergency Departments will increase as will admissions to hospital inpatient units. It is likely that health outcomes will decline and overall costs will increase. This was the result that occurred **before** Integrated Health Homes were implemented. It is what will happen if Integrated Health Homes are not permitted to continue providing the services they have been providing to this fragile population for the past three plus years.

Letter to the Legislative Health Policy Oversight Committee

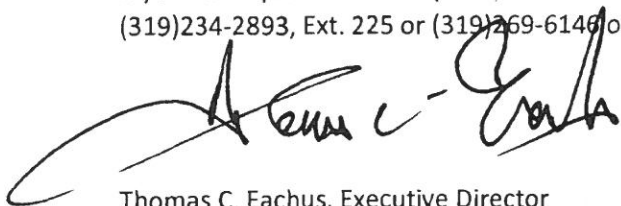
December 15, 2017

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I/we have multiple examples of the positive outcomes this program has achieved and have patients/families willing to tell their stories should the committee be interested in hearing more about the benefits of this program and the implications of not having these services available to them.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you.

If you have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (319)234-2893, Ext. 225 or (319)269-6146 or by email at [Thomas.Eachus@unitypoint.org](mailto:Thomas.Eachus@unitypoint.org).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas C. Eachus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Thomas C. Eachus, Executive Director  
UnityPoint Health Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center, Inc.