

April 5, 2012

Dear CMHC Employees, Consumers and Family Members:

The Lancaster County Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) was established in 1976 for the purpose of providing behavioral health services in the community rather than in state institutions. Thanks to a highly trained and dedicated staff, the CMHC has effectively served this purpose. However, fiscal constraints are making it increasingly difficult for Lancaster County to adequately fund the critical programs and services offered by the CMHC. For this reason the CMHC Planning Committee was established to provide the Lancaster County Board with a sustainable long-term plan for providing quality behavioral health services in our community.

The Committee recognized an opportunity to improve services, and recommended the establishment of a new service model based on the integration of primary care and behavioral health services, peer support, and more consumer involvement in programing. The County Board has accepted this recommendation, and is now working with Region V Systems to establish the essential components of the new service model. The next step will be an invitation to providers to submit cooperative and innovative proposals for providing services under the new model.

To help facilitate a seamless transition for consumers and family members, the CMHC will be maintained at the current location for up to two (2) years, and CMHC employees will remain as County employees during the transition process. Also, a communication plan is being developed to provide timely and accurate information on the transition, including regular updates on Channels 5 and 10.

Finally, Ron Sorensen is being hired as the CMHC Director to replace Dean Settle after he retires. As the former director of the Division of Behavioral Health Services for the State of Nebraska, Ron comes to the CMHC with extensive knowledge and experience. In the upcoming months Ron will be meeting with employees, consumers, family members and other stakeholders. The County Board has great confidence in Ron's ability to lead the CMHC through the transition period.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deb Schorr". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Deb Schorr, Chair  
Lancaster County Board of Commissioners