

Letter, 8/2: Consider Behavior Health Issues

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People with behavioral health needs live among us every day and on most days the community doesn't notice, but those of us who work with this population know all too well that the system of help for them and their families is a fragile one.

I'd like to thank Lincoln Community Foundation for releasing their new Vital Signs report on Behavioral Health Trends in Lincoln. I encourage the community to read this document as the results will likely surprise many.

The report highlights the importance of collaboration among service providers. We at The Bridge work daily with our peer agencies, emergency personnel, the hospitals and families to find the best care for individuals with unresolved mental health issues and substance-use disorders. Many days, we make great progress. Other days, we struggle because of lack of resources and flaws in the system.

I encourage community members to consider donating to causes that address these concerns. While substance use and mental health are not "warm and fuzzy" causes, addressing these issues with much-needed resources is critical to the well-being of the community.

Finally, please note that the findings in this Vital Signs report regarding the importance of employment in helping people with behavioral health issues to remain stable. If you are in a position to hire, please consider those with substance abuse and mental health issues who are active in recovery.

Thank you for the opportunity to share solutions to the concerns that so many in our community have.

Phil Tegeler, Executive Director, The Bridge Behavioral Health, Lincoln