

To whom it may concern,

I am reaching out to express my endorsement for the necessary measures to establish a 708 Board in Piatt County. I am convinced that these steps will contribute to creating a robust framework for individuals in need of mental health, substance abuse treatment, and developmental supportive services, particularly for those from our underserved community. Piatt County has recognition as an area where the needs of the community can be addressed by local resources, and I am of the opinion that the creation of a 708 Board would be another positive move in this tradition.

The demand for mental health services is increasingly visible, and the need for treatment is on the rise. Nationally, 1 in 5 adults has faced a mental health issue, 1 in 6 children have a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental condition, and over 63% of adults have encountered at least one Adverse Childhood Experience. In the realm of addiction recovery, 16.5% of individuals aged 12 and over have met the criteria for a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year, Illinois is seeing a 15% annual increase in opioid-related deaths, and sadly, 70% of those with alcohol use or dependence issues have not received any treatment. Furthermore, when discussing services for individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities, within the next decade, 28,000 children in Illinois will be added to a statewide waiting list for services, 14% of Piatt County's population has a disability, and The Center receives weekly requests for support from adults with disabilities.

For over half a century, The Center has proudly served as a pillar of support for individuals in the fields of mental health and developmental disability services. Their reputation for delivering high-quality clinical services and their collaborative approach are well-known, which is one of the reasons they annually assist around 600 unique individuals from 12 different counties. One of the major challenges for The Center has been managing rising operational costs while facing a stagnant and inadequately compensated state reimbursement rate. If these costs continue to increase without a new source of supplemental revenue soon, then adjustments to services and/or staff will be inevitable. While these changes might inconvenience private insurance clients, they could be disastrous for those who are underserved.

I urge you to support the establishment of a 708 Board on November 5th. Together, we can ensure our community has a robust support network for those in need by backing the creation of a 708 Board. Let's make it clear that the needs of Piatt County residents will be met by our neighbors. I encourage you to vote in favor of 708.

Sincerely, Paul Spangler