

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for taking steps to create a 708 Board in Piatt County. I believe that these actions will help provide a healthy framework for those seeking services related to mental health, substance use treatment, and for developmental supportive services. Piatt County has always be known as a place where community need is best met with community resources and hopefully, passing a 708 Board would be another positive step in this tradition.

The statistics tell the story. The need for mental health services continues to be more in demand and the need for treatment continues to rise. Nationally 1 in 5 adults have experienced a mental illness, 1 in 6 children have a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder, and over 63% of all adults have experience at least one Adverse Childhood Experience. In field of addiction recovery, 16.5% of people over the age of 12 have met criteria for a substance use disorder (SUD) in the past year, Illinois Opioid deaths continue to climb at about 15% annually, and sadly 70% of individuals with an alcohol use or dependence issue have never received treatment. Finally, when talking about the services related to serving those with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities, within the next 10 years, 28,000 children in Illinois will move onto a statewide list, waiting for services, 14% of Piatt County residents has a disability, and The Center receives calls weekly for those in need of support to serve additional adults with disabilities. While many of these are national numbers, these statistics are relative to our community as well.

For over 50 years, The Center has proudly stood as a beacon of support for those in the mental health and developmental disability service field, as well as a resource for our community. Their reputation for high clinical services and collaborative approach is wide-known and one of the reasons why annually they serve around 600 unduplicated individuals from 12 different counties. One of the bigger challenges to The Center has been how to navigate rising operational costs with a stagnant and woefully incompetent state-reimbursement rate. If these expenses continue to rise at current rates and there is not an identified supplemental revenue stream relatively soon, then changes to services and/or workforces will be the only logical conclusion. While this would be inconvenient for the private insured clients, these changes could be catastrophic for those under resourced individuals.

Please consider this proactive step to ensure our community has a strong network of support for those seeking services by supporting the establishment of a 708 Board on November 5th.

Respectfully,

Steve Keagle
Pastor
Lodge Church Of God