

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: sunset commission NorthSTAR
Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2014 2:06:47 PM

From: John Dornheim
Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2014 12:00 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: sunset commission NorthSTAR

Attn: Mr. Ken Levine,
Director,
Sunset Advisory Commission

P.O. Box 13066, Austin, TX 78711

Dear Mr. Levine;

I am writing you about the Sunset Advisory Commission's misrepresentations of the efficacy and need for NorthSTAR to continue serving the North Texas communities it well serves by providing open access, choice of providers, separation of provider and authority roles, and integrating substance abuse services with mental health services. Those may be the main talking points, but there is much more to NorthSTAR than talk.

NorthSTAR has served more people at less cost than anywhere else in the state – and that is a fact – also people who need help can still get same day access, regardless of whether they have Medicaid or not – I know because I have helped people get into the system on the day they called or met with me.

I have served on many committees/board with the stakeholders of NorthSTAR and can assure you that NorthSTAR is very collaborative and works to meet the needs and challenges of our area, including during times of crisis. I served on the Katrina Mental Health Taskforce as a committee leader, and saw the dedication firsthand.

What also makes NorthSTAR unique is that it provides a wide array of services and collaborates in community initiatives, including jail diversion, crisis intervention, Assisted Outpatient Treatment, and all of the mental health courts. I spent many years working with Crisis Intervention Training with the local law enforcement agencies and can say that because of the collaborative ability of NorthSTAR, many

people have their lives back, instead of having to live their lives back in prison or jail.

It takes a village to help people with mental illness – it can take one stroke of a pen to end that help – please don't let that be your pen.

Sincerely,

John Dornheim

Special Projects Manager, NAMI Dallas

John Dornheim

NAMIWalks/Special Projects Manager