



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami

**Kaufman
County**

October 14, 2014

Mr. Ken Levine
Director, Sunset Advisory Commission
P.O. Box 13066
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Mr. Levine:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and membership of the **National Alliance on Mental Illness of Kaufman County (NAMIKC)**, I am writing to relay our concerns about the Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report, Health and Human Services Commission and System Issues, October 2014. Our membership, which largely consists of persons using NorthSTAR services and their families, has expressed grave concerns about the staff recommendation to discontinue the NorthSTAR program. NorthSTAR serves our membership and County very well and any chance that it may be discontinued causes extreme anxiety and concern.

Prior to NorthSTAR, many persons in our area who did not have Medicaid could not access services, or could not access adequate services. We hear from our family members and friends in the rest of the state that this situation still exists outside of NorthSTAR. It was somewhat alleviated by the wait list funding allotted in the last legislative session, but the wait list has started to grow again. With circa 1200 people moving to Texas daily, that list will undoubtedly continue to grow.

Our ability to have stakeholder input into the evolution of NorthSTAR is unprecedented in the state. Each North Texas Behavioral Health Authority (NTBHA) meeting is attended by forty to fifty persons representing the entire stakeholder community, including persons living with mental illness, their family members, providers, government officials, law enforcement, and others. These meetings allow open flow of dialogue between those in the audience and the Board. This is unequalled in the state and results in changes in NorthSTAR being made by consensus of the stakeholder community.

1505 E. 1st. N. St. Kaufman, Tx 75142, 972-962-3784, ejglenn@embarqmail.com or 214-202-1183
Gbdb1959@sbcglobal.net

The contractor for NorthSTAR, ValueOptions, is viewed as part of the community and has always been open, accessible, and responsive to community input. Our experience with the STAR and STAR-plus and CHIP plans does not echo that open exchange of ideas and response to community input.

A large majority of the serious and persistently mentally ill (SPMI) adults served by NorthSTAR do not have Medicaid and would be seriously impacted by the change in systems that are recommended in this report. That is of utmost concern to our membership.

Prior to this report, our community had already begun discussing and planning for needed updates and structural changes to NorthSTAR, both within the community and with DSHS and HHSC, that will solve the issue of not being able to participate in the 1115 waiver fully, and also will enhance integration of other healthcare services with behavioral healthcare. NAMI Kaufman County is requesting that the Commission reject the staff recommendation to discontinue NorthSTAR and allow the NorthSTAR community to continue to work to evolve a model that has shown unparalleled success in treating more people with open access, choice of providers, and the efficiencies that competition and flexibility have provided.

If we do away with NorthStar we will be going further backwards in providing care for persons with mental illness. NorthSTAR has been a remarkably successful model in both serving more persons and containing costs. Your decisions affect lives; implementing this recommendation would be disastrous for thousands of persons who currently have the hope of recovery in North Texas.

Yours truly,

Emma Glenn
President NAMI KC

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: NorthStar
Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2014 8:05:40 AM
Attachments: [Sunset Commision.docx](#)

From: Emma Glenn [mailto:ejglenn@embarqmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2014 11:52 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Cc: Emma Glenn
Subject: NorthStar

Mr. Ken Levine,

Please give your highest consideration to keeping the NorthStar Program.

Emma J. Glenn
NAMI Kaufman County
namikaufmancounty@yahoo.com
972-962-3784