



# COLLIN COUNTY

**Office of the County Judge**  
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September 29, 2015

Kirk Cole  
Interim Executive Commissioner  
Texas Department of State Health Services  
PO Box 149347  
Austin, Texas 78714-9347

Dear Mr. Cole:

Collin County (and LifePath Systems) are very excited about moving forward with the enclosed plan for indigent behavioral healthcare. We are committed to working with the staff of HHSC and DSHS to develop and implement a system that is efficient, meets the needs of individuals and families, and helps build stronger, safer communities.

Among the changes that need to occur, one challenge stands out that will take careful coordination and continued exploration. The inclusion of substance abuse as part of the local authority's role adds considerable responsibility. Two issues make this even more complex in the Dallas area:

1. The total amount of funds designated for Collin County indigent substance abuse services is very small for the number and types of treatment services required, and for the known need in our communities. In the NorthSTAR program, mental health funds have been expended for substance abuse services. With the division of funds into their appropriate categories, it is clear that the dollars available are insufficient.
2. Another contributing factor adding to the difficulty is coming into compliance with the federal block grant requirements regarding the use of substance abuse funds. It is our intent to be in compliance with all federal and state rules and requirements. That may, however, conflict with the state's mandate to offer contracts to existing Significant Traditional Providers in the transition, as some of those are for-profit agencies.

We are prepared to proactively work together to resolve any future questions of access to care, county of residence and/or payment responsibility for substance abuse services. We wanted to bring this to your attention and hope to continue this conversation with the State's transition team to find solutions that will address this problem before January 2017.

Sincerely

Keith Self  
County Judge