

February 6, 2013

Senator Bill Avery, Chairperson
Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

RE: LB 434

Dear Senator Avery and members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee:

The Department of Health and Human Services has reviewed LB 434 and supports an update to the Emergency Management Act so that the information on registries of people with special needs, used to assist such persons before, during and after a disaster or other emergency, are not considered a public record.

Local public health departments have been working collaboratively with their emergency management partners and community organizations to identify persons that may need extra assistance during and after a public emergency. These persons may be developmentally disabled. Registrants may have problems with mobility so they need assistance in relocating to a safe environment. Registrants may be on home dialysis or require oxygen. Emergency managers and local health departments have been attempting to develop special needs registries so that care plans are in place prior to emergencies. Current law makes these registries public record allowing those with criminal intent to learn of the residential location of vulnerable people. This update will eliminate that possibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this bill.

Sincerely,



Joann Schaefer, MD
Chief Medical Officer – State of Nebraska
Director, Division of Public Health
Department of Health and Human Services

cc: Senator Scott Price