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TRIAGE

Making sense of health care

By Judith Graham

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Originally posted: October 14, 2008

Michigan, Iowa teens left by families in Nebraska

Imagine being a teenager, taken by your family to another state and dropped off at a hospital -- so someone else would take responsibility for you.

It's happened twice over the last week in Nebraska.

In one case, a 13 year old Michigan boy got in a car with his mom, who drove over 700 miles to Omaha to leave him at a medical center in the middle of the night.

In another case, a 14 year old Iowa girl was deposited by her grandparents at Omaha's Creighton University Medical Center.

Both families were relinquishing responsibility for the teens under Nebraska's controversial safe haven law, the only in the U.S. that allows families to leave children of any age at a hospital.

No one expected the outcome: most of the 19 kids dropped off at hospitals to date have been teens or pre-teens.

Certainly, no one expected that distraught parents or grandparents from other states would come to Nebraska to hand over their kids -- the newest development.

Much has been written about the problems that can lead families to relinquish children, whether in Nebraska or elsewhere. In particular, the lack of supports for families dealing with extremely troubled kids -- especially, insufficient mental health services -- can be devastating.

Many readers of this blog have applauded Nebraska for offering an alternative for children who might otherwise be subjected to abuse from overwhelmed parents. If the only alternative is giving children up, it's better than seeing kids neglected or

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subject to violence, you've said.

But think of the children, especially teenagers who face the reality of abandonment.

"You could imagine being a child and your parent asks you to go to a hospital and they just drive away, what feelings that would create for the children," said Gene Klein, executive director of Project Harmony in Omaha, quoted by [KPTM 42 News](#).

State officials are concerned that the spirit of Nebraska's safe haven law is being violated. "I certainly recognise and can commiserate and empathise with families across our state and across the country who are obviously struggling with parenting issues, but this is not the appropriate way of dealing with them," said Todd Landry, head of Nebraska's Department of Health and Human Services, quoted in a report by [BBC News](#).

Safe haven laws in other states apply to infants up to age 1, not older children, and are meant to prevent baby dumping.

As for the Michigan boy whose mother drove to Omaha with the purpose of leaving him there, the [Detroit News](#) reports today that the mom is having "second thoughts about surrendering her children."

It's not clear whether the boy's father was aware of his wife's plans or whether the woman had sought help in Michigan, the newspaper said.

There appears to be growing support for changing Nebraska's law, which has drawn national and international attention after a widowed dad left 9 of his 10 children at an Omaha hospital in late September. Two legislative committees will meet next month to consider that possibility, the Detroit News reports.

For my previous posts on this developing story, click [here](#).

in [Children](#) | [Permalink](#)



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Many counselors and other troubled teens help are working in the country that provides right information about any kind of residential treatment center and its program for desired people. You can contact such counselors 24 hours a day and seven days in a week.

<http://www.restoreteens.com/Search/0/Residential-Treatment-Center/index.html>

Posted by: Residential Centers | Nov 5, 2008 12:26:46 AM

The troubled teenagers school is offering excellent education for the development of troubled teens. They are giving highly input for the betterment of struggling teens. They especially welcome those teens who are not getting proper care and attention from parents.

<http://www.teenageproblems.net/>

Posted by: troubled teensrgers | Dec 16, 2008 12:32:20 AM
