**Talking Points for Letters of Support**

* There are no providers of geriatric psychiatric and substance abuse care in the service area
* Seniors and their elderly spouse less able to travel for care
* Spouse of patient is often times elderly and has trouble driving long distances
* The growth in those 65 and older will only increase the need for geriatric psych and SA services
* Difficult to place geriatric patients in need of psych and SA services because they are not appropriate to treat in general adult population
* Many patients suffer from Alzheimer’s or dementia, which can lead to depression and substance abuse
* Many patients have recently experienced a significant life event, such as the passing of a spouse, family member, or friend
* Many patients can become socially isolated due to the passing of spouse, family members, and friends resulting in depression and substance abuse
* For many area residents and their families, out-of-area admission of a family member is a difficult hardship
* Closest gero-psych facility is approximately 37 miles from Fitzgerald, where their primary physicians are located
* Admission to such far away facilities disrupts the continuity of the patient's localized medical and psychiatric care
* Distance inhibits familial involvement if patient care