

July 30, 2014

State Senator

P.O. Box #30036  
State Capitol  
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

State Representative

P.O. Box #30014  
State Capitol  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Honorable State Senator/State Representative:

I am the parent of a child //or adult child// with a disability receiving public mental health services from the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority ("OCCMHA"). My son //or daughter// is // \_\_\_\_ // years old and requires //24-hour care, supervision, day programming, health care//. //Tell your "story" about why these services are important ... briefly ... here//.

I strongly urge your consideration about the effects of the proposed budget reductions to the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority (OCCMHA). Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities will lose services and be severely impacted if Michigan's Department of Community Health continues to reduce OCCMHA's overall budget relative to Medicaid as well as from the general fund (GF). The budget for FY14 was reduced by \$14 million; it is anticipated that the FY15 budget will realize an additional \$8-10 million reduction.

Specifically, there has been a significant reduction in the GF dollars available to the OCCMHA. These are funds to help people who do not qualify for Medicaid, but also cannot afford to pay for important mental health care services like medications, case management, respite care, and jail diversion, to name a few. Recently, the state removed \$20 million of GF dollars from OCCMHA's budget. This decision was made with the understanding that many people who had been receiving services through the GF would now be insured under the Medicaid expansion program known as "Healthy Michigan." OCCMHA originally had \$30 million in GF, and then after the \$20 million cut it only received about \$12 million in return from "Healthy Michigan" payments, thus, leaving an \$8 million dollar gap.

As a result, the OCCMHA has had to implement a "Service Wait List," no respite or other services for minor children without Medicaid, and beginning in FY15, only state licensed camps will be allowed because they can receive Medicaid dollars. Many families use certified, but unlicensed day camps for respite services to get a break from the rigors of caring for a child/adult with special needs. Moreover, this significant reduction of GF dollars directly and negatively impacts a large group of adults with disabilities having a sizable "spend-down" or "deductible" that they must pay prior to Medicaid kicking in for them each month. GF dollars have historically been used to cover this "spend-down" amount before Medicaid was billed for a service. This covering of the "spend-down" amount is in jeopardy and could result in no mental health service whatsoever for some fairly difficult-to-care-for persons with disabling conditions.

I respectfully suggest the introduction of a supplemental FY15 budget bill to allow the DCH to correct this GF shortfall. We need to maintain these vital mental health services in Oakland County.

As a parent/advocate/consumer, I urge you to use your power and influence, as my elected representative, to protect the most vulnerable citizens of our state and stop these proposed reductions. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,