



MAIN CAMPUS

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Written Testimony for the Senate Government Operations Committee
Wednesday, July 31, 2013

Chairman Richardville and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dan Russell and I am Chief Executive Officer of Genesee Health System (formerly Genesee County Community Mental Health). Genesee Health System is the stand alone community mental health board and substance abuse coordinating agency for Genesee County. In FY012, GHS served almost 17,000 individuals. GHS also operates A Federally Qualified Health Center providing primary care services to homeless individuals and individuals living in public housing.

On behalf of our consumers and, more importantly, the community members we do not or cannot serve, I would like to encourage you to adopt the Senate version of HB 4714. While we commend Senator Caswell for his long standing commitment to the individuals we serve, we are concerned that SB 422 will be too costly, and not provide sufficient coverage. We agree with the statements provided by MACMHB, and do not need to repeat these.

Our main building sits two minutes from downtown Flint. The many challenges and heartbreaks of Flint and Genesee County are well known, even on a national level, but just to name a few:

- Third unhealthiest county according to the RWJ Foundation County Health Rankings.
- Consistently on the FBI's most violent cities list; just named #1 for cities over 100,000.
- Flint Public Schools just announced 570 layoffs over the next two years.
- Poverty and unemployment rates far exceed state and national averages.

It is not an overstatement to say that Genesee County is a county in crisis. We may lead, but there are many other communities in Michigan that are close to the same situation. Our state needs an initiative that will provide the most care for the largest number of individuals, without taking away precious general fund dollars. We feel that the Senate version of HB 4714 is the best solution. These problems in Flint and similar communities are not going to get better without help. We will not be part of the recovery that is starting in other parts of the country.

Communities like Flint across the state of Michigan need the most powerful legislation available. For these reasons, we ask that you adopt the Senate version of HB 4714.

Thank you for this opportunity to talk to you today.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dan Russell'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.