

For September 20, 2016 Agenda re: HB 4674

Hon. Tom Leonard, Michigan House of Representatives

A residential facility to provide rehabilitative and recovery services for severely mentally ill adults has been proposed in the area in which we live. It is being called a “therapeutic farm.”

Upon lengthy investigation with the State of Michigan and its various departments, we have found that there is an absence of clarity – a loophole – when it comes to therapeutic farms when looking at licensing, on-site staffing requirements and staff certifications.

We believe this loophole needs to be closed and the appropriate wording be considered and implemented for HB 4674:

“Therapeutic Farms” which offer residential rehabilitative services for the severely mentally ill shall be licensed and have the same staffing certification requirements as community mental health facilities.

The only other “therapeutic farm” in Michigan has not only chosen to be licensed but also has received accreditation from the Joint Commission for mental health standards. However, we strongly believe that if and when future therapeutic farms are started in the State of Michigan, standards defining their practices should be integrated into the Mental Health Code.

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