



## **Executive Summary** ***Save Public Guardians*** ***to Protect the Most*** ***Vulnerable***

### **Introduction**

The number of Public Guardians in the State of Michigan has dramatically decreased over the last two decades. In 2009, there were 300 companies in operation, now there are less than 150 companies left. This decrease is directly tied to the number of Community and Mental Health guardianship cases assigned to guardians, for which they receive no compensation. The situation is so dire that there are counties in Michigan *that do not have a single public guardian left to serve.*

This imbalance in uncompensated care is leading directly to the shut down of the Public Guardian system in Michigan. Public Guardians are the last safety net for this vulnerable population. Public Guardians are appointed by Probate Courts in case of last resort after all family, friends, and public service options have been exhausted.

### **Summary of Benefits Provided by Public Guardians**

- Make medical and housing placement decisions
- Consent to psychotropic medicines
- Reduce hospitalizations
- Bypass incarceration or limit jail time
- Secure and maintain Social Security, VA and Pension Benefits
- Secure and maintain Medicaid Benefits
- Provide end of life decision making
- Maintain all duties and obligations to the Probate Court
- Resolve criminal issues

### **Pending Public Health Crisis Without Public Guardians**

- There are approximately 14,000 wards that are under public guardianship, of them approximately 4,000-5,000 also receive some level of CMH services.
- These clients will no longer be guided to proper housing, employment, physical and mental care and treatment.
- These clients will become a public health crisis and will fall to the hospitals, jails, and prisons as the new safety net.

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- **The average seven-day emergency stay in a psychiatric hospital costs nearly \$40,000.00 in Medicaid funds.**
- **The cost for incarcerating a prisoner in the DOC for one year is nearly \$30,000.**
- **Incarcerating a prisoner with serious mental illness for a year is \$100,000.**
- **The cost for incarcerating an inmate in a County Jail for 30 days is \$3,700.**
- End of life decisions will cease; no one will speak for the individual; directly causing prolonged and potentially unwanted medical care.
- Police, fire and homeless shelters and other public services will become overburdened with cases that currently have appropriate supportive housing.
- Illegal drug and alcohol use will increase as Social Security and other benefit checks will not be used as intended.
- **A Public Guardian can work with the wards to prevent these things from happening for only \$83 per month.**

### **What Can Michigan Do Now to Protect the Safety Net Before It's Too Late?**

Appropriate funds to the Department of Health and Human Services to compensate Public Guardians \$83.00 per month for the approximately 4,500 wards who are also CMH clients. A small investment of \$4,482,000 can protect the most vulnerable and keep the public guardian system in place.

The time to act is now.