

House Ways and Means Committee

October 2, 2019

Good Morning, I am Sara Lurie, CEO of Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties (or CEI) located here in Lansing. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share information with you today as you prepare to consider HB 4325 and make vitally important decisions that impact the care of some of our most vulnerable, yet resilient citizens. In 2018, CEI served nearly 13,000 individuals in our service area. This is nearly 1,000 over the previous year, and during 2019 we continue to have high demand and volume of individuals we have never seen before, entering services via our Crisis Services. We provide 24/7 Crisis Stabilization and comprehensive behavioral health specialty services for those with severe mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, intellectual or developmental disabilities, and/or Substance Use Disorders.

In our organization, we currently employ 320 Licensed, Master's Prepared Behavioral Health Staff across all of our clinical services. Seventy-four or nearly 25% of our Behavioral Health Staff are Licensed Professional Counselors. Should the regulations being proposed by LARA go into effect and jeopardize LPCs ability to maintain the scope of practice that they have been allowed to exercise over the past 30 years, it would have a devastating impact on our workforce and our care for individuals and families we serve.

During a national behavioral health workforce shortage, we along with all providers of behavioral health are already struggling to recruit and retain behavioral health professionals. As the public behavioral health provider and the safety net to our local communities, Licensed Professional Counselors are a vital piece of the puzzle in our ability to maintain services to those with the most severe forms mental illness,

emotional disturbance, intellectual/developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders.

If the Licensed Professional Counselor current scope of practice becomes codified in the Michigan Public Health Code it would clearly allow LPCs to continue the scope of practice they have held for the past 30 years and avoid service interruptions to vulnerable individuals and families they serve as an important part of our behavioral health workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information today. Please contact me at 517-346-8212 or [luriesa@ceicmh.org](mailto:luriesa@ceicmh.org) if I can be of assistance.