



# Ascension

November 6, 2019

Dear Chairwoman and Committee Members,

My name is Jarrett Schroeder and I am Chief of Behavioral Health Services for Ascension Michigan. I appreciate the opportunity to address the House Appropriations Sub-Committee on Health and Human Services. Ascension Michigan is committed to serving all persons with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable. We are dedicated to providing care which sustains and improves the health of individuals and communities. An important part of that care is providing behavioral health services for those in need that is both seamless and comprehensive.

Over the last year or more, we at Ascension Michigan have seen a significant increase in the wait times for patients we serve who are currently hospitalized at one of our acute psychiatric inpatient units and are in need of hospitalization at one of the state-run psychiatric hospitals. The previous wait times for a patient to receive care at a state run psychiatric hospital of about 3-4 months have increased to about 6-8 months for these patients who need focused care. On a given day, there are approximately 180 patients on a wait list for a state psychiatric bed across the state. This has proven quite challenging for our associates and providers who provide care for patients who are often violent and are really in need of a more focused treatment setting that the state-run psychiatric units can provide.

There has been discussion in the behavioral health community about potential solutions to the growing crisis including increasing the number of state psychiatric beds, changing reimbursement models, and improving outpatient resources for aftercare following state psychiatric hospitalization, to name a few. We have learned that part of the problem lies with difficulty in finding placement for patients who are deemed stable to discharge from the state-run psychiatric hospitals due to concerns about potential liability for group homes and residential facilities accepting such patients. We do believe that given such concerns, that the topic of tort reform should be considered in the discussion as well.

Sincerely,

Jarrett M. Schroeder, MD  
Chief of Behavioral Health Services - Ascension Michigan  
Chair, Department of Psychiatry  
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