



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.



Educate. Advocate. Change.

The Michigan Guardianship Association

...advocates that all other alternatives be used whenever possible and that guardianship should be used only as a last resort.

...provides education and training featuring topics of immediate concern to guardians and is offered through presentations by expert speakers, round table discussions, debates and networking. These sessions bring together people with diverse backgrounds which allows guardians to enhance their skills and knowledge at an affordable cost.

...is governed by a Board of Directors whose leadership facilitates an exceptional exchange of information to enable guardians to provide the highest level of ethical services while maintaining best practices.

OUR MISSION

THE MISSION OF THE MICHIGAN GUARDIANSHIP ASSOCIATION IS TO PROVIDE ADVOCACY, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GUARDIANS AND SURROGATES AND TO PROMOTE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF VALUES, STANDARDS AND ETHICS.

OUR VISION

MICHIGAN GUARDIANSHIP ASSOCIATION IS THE PREMIER RESOURCE IN ADVOCATING AND PROMOTING THE ADVANCEMENT AND EDUCATION OF GUARDIANS AND ALTERNATIVE DECISION-MAKERS.

MGA

Phone: (586) 996-3456

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MICHIGAN GUARDIANSHIP ASSOCIATION

The Importance of Guardians In Michigan



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The Michigan

Guardianship Association

is a non-profit organization that aspires to strengthen guardianship and related services through networking, continuing education, and tracking legislation. Members include:

- Guardians
- Conservators
- Fiduciaries
- Representative Payees
- Physicians and Hospitals
- Advocates/Powers of Attorney
- Funeral directors
- Attorneys
- Social Workers
- Bankers
- Case Managers
- Nursing Homes
- Adult Foster Care Home Owners

Educational Opportunities

MGA conferences provide an opportunity for personal interaction with professionals and providers from all areas of guardianship. Each conference features speakers and workshops that provide valuable information specific to the field. It is an excellent opportunity to meet with people from across the state who deal with similar issues.

Legislative Education

MGA is actively engaged in educating the Legislature on the importance of guardianship in Michigan. Our participation in bill monitoring has already resulted in a number of bills being amended to protect our wards and the profession.

What is a Guardian?

A guardian is a person or agency appointed by a probate court and given power and responsibility to make certain decisions about the care of another individual.

A guardian might be able to decide:

- where the person lives
- what medical care the person should receive
- who will care for the person every day

If the individual has a reduced life expectancy due to advanced illness, the guardian may have the power to make an informed decision on behalf of the individual regarding receiving, continuing, discontinuing, or refusing medical treatment. A full guardian can make all decisions for the individual. A limited guardian can only make decisions for the individual that the court allows.

What is a Conservator?

A conservator is a person or agency appointed by a probate court and given power and responsibility for the estate (financial assets and property) of an adult.

A conservator may be needed when the individual is unable to manage his or her property and financial affairs effectively.

Some of the reasons that might prevent the individual from being able to manage his or her property and financial affairs are:

- mental illness or deficiency
- physical illness or disability
- chronic use of alcohol /other intoxicants

Becoming a Member...

Membership is available to individuals and organizations who serve as guardians or professionals that provide services which enhance the role of a guardian.

Individual memberships are divided into two different categories:

Family membership is defined as an individual who acts as a guardian for a family member or friend.

Professional membership is defined as a person who is court appointed for three or more non-related wards.

Organizational membership is available in increments of three, four, five and ten employees. The membership is listed in the organization's name and designates one individual to represent that organization.



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