

## House CARES Task Force

July 31, 2017

### **Location:**

Livingston County EMS Building, 1911 Tooley Road, Howell, MI

The House CARES Task Force met for the first time on July 31 at the Livingston County EMS Building in Howell.

The Task Force heard compelling testimony from a number of people in the surrounding area whose lives and jobs intersect with people with mental illness. The panel included:

- Connie Conklin, Executive Director, Livingston County Community Mental Health;
- Honorable Michael Hatty, 44<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court (Adult Drug Court);
- Sheriff Mike Murphy, Livingston County;
- Dr. Stephen Pinals, Department of Psychiatry, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital;
- Honorable Carol Sue Reader, 53<sup>rd</sup> District Court (Mental Health Court);
- Dave Stanifer, Mental Health Services Director, Woodland Correctional Facility;
- Jamie Wright, Veteran Justice Outreach Worker, VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System;
- Dr. I. David Yanga, Chief Medical Officer, Brighton Center for Recovery;
- Francine Zysk, Court Administrator, 53<sup>rd</sup> District Court.

The presenters gave thoughtful commentary based on their experiences, and although they each offered a unique perspective, a few recurring themes were prevalent throughout the meeting.

These themes included: the need for more specialized doctors and providers; doing more to bridge the gap in time between a presenting event and subsequent treatment; combating the opioid epidemic and other substance abuse problems; the critical role that wrap-around services (such as housing, food, and transportation) play in determining whether a person will continue treatment; and focusing resources on services that will provide meaningful treatment, rather than simply spending money to house a person in prison.

Written comments were collected from those in attendance. After the meeting concluded, Task Force members toured the Livingston County Jail to observe firsthand the practices and procedures at the jail.

The next scheduled meeting will be on Aug. 17 at Hope Network in Grand Rapids.