



### **House CARES Task Force**

August 17, 2017

**Location: Hope Network, 775 36th St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49548**

The task force held its second meeting on Thursday, August 17 in Grand Rapids. Task force members and those in attendance heard from organizations in the community that serve our most vulnerable people and a few parents who shared their experiences as caretakers.

Testimonies touched on frustrations navigating resources for care, the importance of investing in programs for substance abuse disorders as part of the behavioral health system, and the need for a more thoughtful approach to transitioning the homeless and elderly population into appropriate housing.

The presenters also highlighted bright spots in the system. Vocational training for prisoners to enter the workforce upon release, the positive effect diversion courts have made in the criminal justice system, and crisis intervention training for local police officers are examples of ways to bring positive outcomes for people in vulnerable situations.

We continue to collect information and suggestions about where we can make solid policy changes to our criminal justice and mental health systems.

Panelists for the Grand Rapids meeting included:

- Megan Pena, Director of Clinical Services of Hope Network
- William DeBoer, President & CEO of KPEP in Kalamazoo
- Dennis Van Kampen, President & CEO of Mel Trotter Ministries in Grand Rapids
- Brian Vork, Executive Director of 70x7 Life Recovery in Holland

- The Honorable Harvey Hoffman, Association of Drug Court Professionals
- Dr. Cara Poland, MD Assistant Professor at MSU and President, Michigan Society of Addiction Medicine
- Chris Becker, Kent County Prosecutor

Written comments were collected from those in attendance. After the meeting concluded, members of the task force toured St. Mary's Mercy Health Hospital in Grand Rapids.

The next scheduled meeting will be 2 p.m., Tuesday, August 29 at Oakland Community Health Network, 2011 Executive Drive, Auburn Hills 48326