

James W. Wilton/35532 Jolaine Ct., Richmond, MI. 48062  
Home Phone 586-727-8760 - Cell Phone 586-876-1235

**Mental Health Testimony**  
**Michigan Mental Health and Wellness Commission**  
**September 6, 2013, Sandusky, MI**

**"Nothing you do for children is ever wasted." -Garrison Keillor**

- Oversight

I am concerned about mental illness and childcare. Who is keeping track of what is going on with the children? Who is accountable for health and welfare of the children? Is it the schools? A mental health professional referred to what we see in society as "systematic victimization." If my wife and I had not witnessed the neglect ourselves we wouldn't be here today.

- Background/history

First, I am not here to do any blame storming. I really don't care how the system got broken or who did it. Most of us know it's broken and we should get about fixing it. I've interviewed many, many people and I can't find anyone who thinks our system is helping the mentally ill, working for children, families, friends or support people. And, major decisions are made without any background information.

- Parent Competency

Many parents with mental illness need help. Children should not be raising themselves and caring for parents. This is basic neglect within our society. A PhD recommended the book, Assessment of Parenting Competency in Mothers with Mental Illness, written by Teresa Ostler, Professor at University of Illinois – Urbana – Champaign, IL, copyright 2008. I don't think we're considering parenting competency. This book is really a how to guide and I wonder why we don't see such processes here.

- Standardization

I don't see any standardized processes. I don't see checklists, Risk Analysis, any "go – no go" criteria or logic. I sense there is a lack of basic guidance, or people in the system are not using the guidance. Without these tools anything that's done can be wrong, or right. But, how's this working for the children?

- Risk

Children are dying and these are some of our most vulnerable. Kids have issues like school and behavioral problems, mental illness by proxy, social problems and crime all caused by their environment.

We need to work from the source of the problem to limit the symptoms, not the other way.