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Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

I have a Developmentally Delayed (DD) son who is 23. He and I are at a time in our relationship that he is ready to go out on his own. After careful consideration of his options the only Living Arrangement that best suits him is Home Of Your Own setting. He has a friend to share a home and the two of them will look for a third roommate. My goal is to make sure my son and his friends are in a safe environment, are well cared for, and especially happy.

However, after much research, I find a tremendous lack of housing available in St. Clair County for our DD population.

The older Group Homes are closing without replacement. Currently, in St. Clair County there are no beds available in any group home for someone looking to move into one.

Adult Foster Care Homes are closing due to aging owners, and CMH has not had any success in recruiting new AFC Home Providers.

CMH has supported Home Of Your Own settings in the past. This is the most independent of living arrangements that has been advocated for years and is Medicaid Law. However, at this time they have stopped supports for new Home Of Your Own. This is my son's option of a living arrangement.

As a parent I am very concerned with my son and the sons and daughters of other families' future living arrangements. Before something happens to me or my health I need to know that services are in place, least of all for my emotional wellbeing. Most families are in agreement.

According to the Michigan Department of Community Health guidelines on self-determination four principles are described:

- ☑ Freedom – to choose how to live your life, where you live, who lives with you, what you do and where you go in your community
- ☑ Authority – to control a set amount of money you use to buy what you need to live your life
- ☑ Support – to get the help you need to live the way you want to live
- ☑ Responsibility – to use public dollars wisely and to contribute to your community.

I urge this commission to persuade St. Clair County CMH to upgrade housing for our DD population and abide by policy.