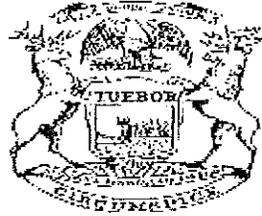


Probate Court

Gregory S Ross
Judge of Probate
60 West Sanilac Avenue
Room 213
Sandusky, MI
48471-1096



Sandy Schlaud,
Register
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County of Sanilac

August 27, 2013

Lt. Governor Calley
DCH Director Jim Haveman
Sen. Bruce Caswell
Sen. Rebekah Warren
Rep. Phil Cavanagh
Rep. Matt Lori

I would like to voice my concern about our geriatric population and the disservice of them for treatment of dementia.

Our court is seeing more petitions for hospitalization where the elderly are oftentimes in a nursing home and petitioned into a psychiatric unit of a hospital because they become unruly and difficult to manage due to dementia. I have been informed this is because the nursing home cannot administer the same psychotropic medication that is available when they are in a psychiatric unit.

Some of the elderly are taken to a center that specializes in geriatric treatment while others are taken to a mental health unit in the area. These persons have dementia and do not understand the process, much less their need for treatment and lack the ability to participate.

Even with not understanding the need for treatment they can be detained in the psychiatric unit for up to 7 days (excluding Sundays and holidays) without receiving any medication or treatment. Once an order is entered, their name is placed on LEIN so they cannot purchase guns and they are ordered to take medication and participate in treatment. Once stabilized and discharged from the hospital, they return to a nursing home reluctant to administer the psychotropic medication ordered due to Federal (I believe this may actually be State) restrictions and guidelines.

This is such a disservice to our elderly. They are removed from familiar surroundings, which can cause more confusion, taken to a hospital where they do not receive treatment until ordered to do so and finally sent back to the facility. During this process, they may be transported via police for a hearing at the court further causing confusion that they have done something illegal or wrong.

As the Baby Boomer Generation is now reaching an age that surpasses life expectancy of prior generations, dealing with dementia type symptoms will only escalate in the future. As a community, programs should be implemented to effectively and compassionately handle the health problems associated with the aging and elderly.

Our elderly deserve more respect and consideration when seeking mental health care than they are currently receiving. They deserve to remain in a familiar setting and be properly medicated without having to go through the traumatic experience of involuntary hospitalization, a

hearing where they have no concept as to what is happening, and ultimately ordered treatment.

Giving guardians the authority to consent to mental health treatment would be an option. Another option would be when a patient is diagnosed with a dementia-type disease; more prescriptions would be readily available. Health care has made dramatic changes in treatment of terminally ill patients, and the same could be done with elderly patients.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Sandra J. Schlaud
Sanilac County Probate Register