

# Great Lakes Recovery Centers

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

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June 17, 2013

Dear Distinguished Members of the Mental Health and Wellness Commission:

Great Lakes Recovery Centers is pleased to provide a few comments that we feel would be useful to the commission. Great Lakes Recovery Centers is a non-profit behavioral health provider with a continuum of services including adult and youth substance use disorder residential programming, outpatient behavioral health services, specialty women and children's programming, prevention programming and prison-based counseling and parolee re-entry services. Great Lakes Recovery Centers provides clinical programming in 10 of the Upper Peninsula's 15 counties.

Great Lakes Recovery Centers would like to let the Commission know the following issues and needs:

- We are concerned about the seemingly fractured service delivery model surrounding behavioral health throughout the State of Michigan and would like to see greater cooperation and streamlining of services between such entities as the Michigan Department of Corrections, the Office of Veterans Affairs, Department of Human Services, Health Plans, and the Community Mental Health system. The fractured nature of these systems often creates a silo in which services are delivered and places barriers on access and resources.
- We fully support the efforts made toward integrated care and would like to see greater funding opportunities made available to more closely align mental health and substance abuse services with primary care.
- We would like to see a stronger, more transparent process of coordinating resources and care with the Department of Corrections and their community based services contracts and funding.
- We would like to encourage the Veterans Administration to continue its effort at utilizing private providers for access of care for veterans to allow greater choice and opportunities to access local providers.
- As a provider of rural based services, current credentialing and accreditation requirements are a barrier to develop the workforce needed to meet the demands of the industry and contractual requirements.



Our mission is to empower people to improve their lives by offering comprehensive, personalized recovery services in communities throughout the Upper Peninsula.



- We encourage the streamlining of multiple credentialing mandates from such entities as insurance providers, health plans, coordinating agencies, DHS, MDOC, and other systems within the State to establish a uniform and realistic credentialing platform.
- We would like to see a greater emphasis on resources provided to the Upper Peninsula for workforce development, training and education. We appreciate the efforts made by the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and our regional coordinating agency, Northcare, in working with us in the use of technology to enhance training and workforce development. Workforce development will need to be a priority if we are going to ensure that quality services will exist to meet the demands of the field.
- We appreciate the efforts made by MDCH to work with the VA to reduce barriers for veterans accessing services and would like to see more support for transitional and residential services for veterans in our local communities.
- Private non-profit behavioral health programs are struggling under increased and redundant mandates from payor sources which often drives up the cost associated with the provision of care. We would like to see the streamlining of accreditation, licensing, and credentialing requirements in the State to reduce redundancies, data collection, and reporting when possible.
- We would like to see increased reimbursements for the provision of behavioral health services to mirror that of the primary health care arena if behavioral health is going to get the attention and importance that it deserves.
- With the upcoming changes to the health care industry, we encourage the State to make sure that there is a full continuum of care for mental health and substance use disorders under the health insurance exchanges and Medicaid.
- We highly support the need for expanded Medicaid in the State and urge the Commission to continue to fight for its implementation.

We are fortunate that service providers in the Upper Peninsula work very collaboratively together to try to meet the needs within our communities for those afflicted with mental health and addiction issues. We support efforts that allow us as a region to develop services and partner in creative ways that keeps the focus on the client and the needs of our shared communities.

We would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

Sincerely,



Greg Toutant  
Executive Director