



# Mental Health Association in Michigan

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## LETTER FROM LANSING

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A monthly newsletter from the  
Mental Health Association in Michigan (MHAM)

### MHAM's Statement on Racism & Equality

The Mental Health Association in Michigan considers racism to be detrimental to the individual, collective mental health and well-being of persons of color. MHAM understands that racism undermines mental health. MHAM is committed to anti-racism in all that we do. The time is now for those systems that are inhabited by racism and discrimination to be reformed and MHAM is committed to working toward that end.

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Welcome to the March 2021 edition of MHAM's monthly newsletter that provides you with public policy updates and other information that impacts the behavioral health care of you and those you love.

**"Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars."** Khalil Gibran

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### From MHAM President & CEO - Marianne Huff, LMSW March 2021

#### The Critical Importance of Increasing Access to Inpatient Psychiatric Treatment in Michigan



In late February, Jay Gross posted a YouTube video that went viral as he pleaded for help on behalf of his adopted 15-year-old son who had been languishing in a mid-Michigan emergency room for two weeks due to a mental health crisis. According to an article that appeared in MIRS (Michigan's Independent Source of News and Information) on March 3, 2021, Jay Gross made this statement in the video, *"The system of mental health is so broken. I'm learning to realize that it is OK to not be OK, and we are experiencing this with our son. But to get help when you are not OK, we are told some of the most ridiculous things I have ever heard in my lifetime,"* Jay Gross said in the video posted on Friday (February 26)."

The article continues to say that, *"One of the ridiculous things he heard: His insurance was "too good." The video went viral on Sunday and on the Monday, they had multiple offers for help, including offers for placement in some facilities that had turned them down before. Jay Gross and his wife, Jo Ann Gross, testified today before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services about the*

*difficulties they had finding placement for their son.”*

MHAM is deeply concerned about the lack of inpatient treatment and overall crisis services for individuals of all ages in Michigan. From MHAM’s perspective, the lack of inpatient psychiatric treatment has been a crisis for many years and became more critical when state general fund dollars to the community mental health system were significantly reduced in 2014. We are hopeful the lack of overall outpatient and inpatient mental health care will be addressed by the legislature.

In July of 2017, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) created MIPAD, a work group whose purpose was to study the lack of inpatient psychiatric beds. According to the Michigan Inpatient Psychiatric Discussions Report (MIPAD) dated February 13, 2018 (page 4):

“The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) currently operates four state psychiatric hospitals and one forensic center that have a grand total of 772 beds. The number of psychiatric beds in community hospitals have also fallen precipitously over the years: community hospitals in Michigan had a collective capacity of 3,041 adult beds and 729 child/adolescent beds in 1993, and this capacity has dwindled in 2017 to 2,197 adult beds and 276 child/adolescent beds.”

Unfortunately, despite the 43 recommendations that were contained in the report, there remain individuals and their families/supporters who experience challenges in being able to find appropriate mental health services when there is a crisis. It is not an uncommon occurrence for MHAM to be contacted by families who have a loved one or a child that has been languishing in a hospital emergency room for days, waiting for a psychiatric hospital or unit to have an available bed. This is a situation that cannot continue. We would not require an individual in the throes of a heart attack or a stroke to “wait” for emergency treatment. We should be treating psychiatric emergencies in the same way that we treat medical emergencies: with appropriate and immediate health care.

MHAM recognizes recent legislation, such as the passage of House Bill 5832 establishing crisis stabilization units and the establishment of the MiCAL hotline, will provide additional resources for families and individuals who are experiencing a psychiatric emergency. At the same time, there is a need for additional beds in state psychiatric hospitals, particularly for individuals who have more significant psychiatric symptoms that cannot be addressed through a community inpatient psychiatric stay. There is a need for a broad continuum of care that is accessible to the community that includes inpatient hospitalization, crisis stabilization and transition to crisis residential programming if warranted.

For children and adolescents, the need for additional psychiatric beds is more critical along with a continuum that offers services that can meet the needs of those who have more significant behavioral health conditions. MHAM will continue to advocate for access to appropriate inpatient mental health services for children, youth, and adults in Michigan.

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## Survey on Integrated Care

Do you know what is meant by “integrated care?” Do you want your healthcare to be “integrated?” If you want to answer these two questions and participate in a statewide research survey, please click on Take Survey button below.

[Take Survey](#)



# PUBLIC POLICY

**SB 190:** To increase the availability of inpatient psychiatric beds for individuals with public insurance such as Medicaid, Senator Curtis Vanderwall introduced Senate Bill 190. According to the bill, “Sec 137b. (1) As a condition of licensing, a psychiatric hospital or psychiatric unit must accept public patients and maintain 50% of beds available to public patients.” The bill also requires a psychiatric hospital and psychiatric unit must submit an annual report to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services as part of the application for license renewal. The Mental Health Association in Michigan supports this bill so that there

can be equal access to inpatient psychiatric treatment for all Michiganders, regardless of insurance or payor.

## Michigan Suicide Prevention Commission Initial Report released

On March 10, the state of Michigan released the Michigan Suicide Commission Initial Report. The commission was established by Governor Whitmer to address increasing rates of suicide in our state.

The Preface of the report explains the goal of the Commission in this way:

*Governor Gretchen Whitmer initiated the Michigan Suicide Prevention Commission following the passage of Public Act 177 of 2019. The Commission was formed in March 2020. The Commission has been charged to work with state departments, nonprofit organizations, and universities on researching the causes and possible underlying factors of suicide in the state. The research must focus on populations showing the highest suicide rates in this state in the decade immediately preceding the effective date of this act, and the highest growth in suicide rates during the same time.*

The report can be found [HERE](#).

## MHAM to Provide Educational Webinars



MHAM is also working to provide more public education about matters related to behavioral health care. In February, we hosted a community conversation about suicide that included experts in the field of suicidology including Amelia Lehto, national speaker, and expert, Katie Hardy, founder of [Six Feet Over](#) and national expert, Andrew Wright, mental

health advocate.

**On April 13**, MHAM will host a webinar about how yoga is being used to help individuals cope with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), trauma and other forms of stress. On May 18, MHAM will host a webinar talking about how improvisation comedy can help with anxiety and depression.

**On April 26**, MHAM will have a virtual community conversation about the criminal justice system and mental health with panelists such as Keith Barber, the Corrections Ombudsman and Pat Streeter, attorney, and member of NAMI—Washtenaw County. Please watch your email for announcements about our virtual events.

MHAM is interested in the numbers of individuals with significant mental health conditions who find themselves in Michigan jails and prisons. Through the work of the Partners in Crisis Advisory Board (PIC), comprised of a group of leaders in the criminal justice and mental health field, MHAM and PIC are advocating for appropriate responses to the

growing problem of the mentally ill landing in jails and prisons, when treatment is what is needed. Stay tuned for more information!

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## MiCal-Michigan Crisis & Access Line

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Having access to mental health care is critical right now. It is important you continue to pay attention to your mental health during the coronavirus crisis. It is normal to feel afraid and anxious, especially when faced with a situation that has many “unknowns”. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by symptoms of anxiety, depression, or hopelessness, please reach out for help. If you are experiencing emotional distress in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, get help from:

### Michigan Stay Well Counseling via the COVID-19 Hotline

Call 1-888-535-6136

Press "8" to talk to a Michigan Stay Well counselor.

Counselors available 24/7 - confidential and free

OR

### National Disaster Distress Helpline

Call: 1-800-985-5950

Text the keyword TALKWITHUS to 66746

Available 24/7

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One more thought...

## CHARITABLE BEQUESTS

A bequest to the Mental Health Association in Michigan through your will is a powerful expression of your commitment to improving the care and treatment of mental illness, promoting positive mental health, and preventing the onset of mental disorders. A bequest can be unrestricted or restricted, and the full amount of your gift is tax deductible. If you would like more information about making a gift through your will, please contact MHAM President & CEO, Marianne Huff at [mhuffmham@gmail.com](mailto:mhuffmham@gmail.com) or call 517.898.3907

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# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

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Membership Information [HERE](#)

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