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March 9, 2020

RE: James Albin

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment to all of you as the state of Michigan considers its budget for FY 2021.

I am Frances Merryman, sister and guardian for Jim Albin who was brain damaged at the age of 5 from the measles and his mental age remains about 8 or 9.

Last year Network 180 made the determination to reduce Jim's PC Points and CLS Units. All I knew about this is that it would reduce the quality or amount of care Jim received at David's House Ministries. So I went through the Fair Hearing process. It was definitely a learning experience for me. Up until last year, I was comfortable allowing David's House Ministries to care for Jim and felt and still feel that they do an excellent job. Little did I know how involved the governmental system is and what DHM needs to do to make sure that Jim's care stays the same or increases when it becomes necessary. It seems to me that the state agencies are actually trying to reduce the level of care Jim receives instead of working with David's House and other residential homes to make sure that individuals who cannot make decisions for themselves have the care they require. I understand that the supports coordinator represents Jim along with me and others at David's House. What we, or at least me, don't know is what exactly we need to present to Network 180 to assure that Jim's care will be maintained or increased as he ages.

To prepare for the State Fair Hearing I hired a coach at my own out-of-pocket expense. Even though we submitted more documentation and several other reports it was not weighted the same by the Administrative Law Judge, because Network 180 did not have those same reports or documentations. So Jim's appeal was denied again. What is the State Fair Hearing process for if you can't present more support for the reasons you disagreed with Network 180's reduction in services? Perhaps a listing of just exactly what is required for these determinations would make sure everyone is on the same page and seeking the same result – fair, adequate care for individuals requesting assistance from the state agencies.

The Fair Hearing process made it feel they were against Jim and he was a burden that needed to be lightened.

I am definitely getting to know how the SIS is used, why a nursing assessment is required and how it influences the PCP. How naive of me to think that everyone involved in Jim's welfare and care had the same devotion to Jim as I do.

Frances Merryman

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