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March 16, 2022

Honorable Mary Whiteford
Health Policy Committee
House of Representatives
372 Capitol Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7414

RE: Letter of Support for Behavioral Health Redesign Package, HB's 4925-4928

Representative Whiteford,

I recently retired after almost 30 years from Kalamazoo County government and court system. I served as assistant corporate counsel for the county, as corporate counsel for the Kalamazoo County Community Mental Health Authority (now called ISK) and as the Probate Register/Court Administrator and Attorney Referee for Circuit/Probate Court. I write today to express my support for the package of bills referenced above in our latest attempt at reforming the mental health system. I have reviewed these bills and those currently resting in the senate at great length.

While I served as corporate counsel for ISK in the mid 1990's, I was intimately involved with the transition of local mental health boards to authority status. We explored many other systems across the country. We discovered then, and I find to still be true, that Michigan has and still does provide some of the most comprehensive and integrated mental health care in the nation. Our system is not perfect by any means. Further, I submit that many of the advances we envisioned back in the 1990's have yet to be fully realized. Towards that end I am glad that a light is being shown upon it as we serve some of the most vulnerable populations in our state.

The bills before the Health Policy Committee go a long way towards strengthening our system and continuing our history of providing comprehensive, innovative, person-centered services at the local community county level.

I look forward to discussing these bills further with you and working together to address and expand services in our state. My contact information is included in this brief letter of support, and I would love the opportunity to assist you and your committee in any way I can in understanding these issues.

Thank you and your committee for your time and attention to these very important pieces of legislation.

Be well,

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