

March 16, 2026

Dear Human Services Subcommittee,

I'm writing to give my testimony in favor of more supportive housing in Michigan.

My husband and I are senior citizens (70+) who are primary caregivers for our 40-year-old daughter who has a mental illness. She lives with us because there are no other housing choices available to her that would provide a safe and supportive environment. We all know that supportive housing (daily or weekly check-ins with social worker to make sure person is safe and health is maintained) is extremely hard to find and in our area, limited to homeless individuals.

Many, many caregivers are senior citizens like my husband and me. Unfortunately, data has not been gathered much over the years. In 2016, NAMI and the National Alliance for Caregiving reported that over 8 million people act as caregivers to adults with a mental illness across the country. This number is largely senior citizens. This population is largely invisible. Another more recent study in New Jersey of the autistic/neurodivergent community, showed 38,000 people living with parents over 60 who are caregivers and primary support for them. I'm guessing Michigan has an equal amount.

In January, I had a serious accident that put me in the hospital and then I received rehab services for almost 6 weeks. If my husband had not been around, our daughter would have been in our house fending for herself. This could have led to her missing key medications, missing doctor appointments, increased anxiety, and exasperated her illness. Eventually, my husband and I will not be around for her. Without a proper place to live she will be at very high risk for homelessness or jail.

A group of NAMI supporters and parents in Washtenaw County are developing ideas for supportive housing solutions for our loved ones. We know it can come in many varieties and we are working on several ideas. I will attach some information.

I urge you to find multiple ways to expand supportive housing in Michigan and to keep the invisible populations in mind as you do so.

Sincerely,

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