

COMMENTS BY MARQUETTE COUNTY SHERIFF MICHAEL H. LOVELACE TO GOVERNOR SNYDER'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMISSION ON JUNE 17<sup>TH</sup>, 2013 AT PRESQUE ISLE PAVILLION IN MARQUETTE, MI.

Good morning and Thank You for allowing me this opportunity to address the Commission.

I am here to address the impact of the Mentally Ill on Law Enforcement here in Marquette and the rest of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan as they are a huge draw on Law Enforcement resources both on the streets and in our jails.

Marquette is the Mecca for the Mentally Ill in the Upper Peninsula. Marquette General/Duke Life point Hospital is the regional hospital for U.P. and therefore automatically draws everyone here for both medical and mental health service. This hospital also has a 24 bed Psyc. Unit that is NOT SECURE.

Pathways is the regional mental health care provider and receives clients both at their offices in Marquette as well as the above referenced Marquette General/Duke Life point Hospital.

Great Lakes Recovery is also a Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Center and provider here in Marquette and also services clients at both locations.

“Room at the Inn” is a local program that provides beds for homeless individuals here in the county and provides safe haven for our homeless which includes the mentally ill.

We have MDOC Inmates that are paroled here in Marquette County that have mental health issues and need for service as does the Marquette County Jail.

Our jail however has become the “Secure” Psyc. Unit for our county by default as the Marquette General/Duke Life point Hospital is not staffed for, nor physically able to contain the “Violent Mentally Ill Patients”

This all goes back to my initial statement that Marquette County is the hub of mental health services here in the U.P. and the Marquette County Jail is the Secure Psyc. Unit.

I need to explain what we (Marquette County Sheriffs' Office) do as keepers of the Mentally Ill in our Jail. First and foremost the Mentally Ill do not belong in Jail. They do not receive the treatment they need, nor are they in a setting that is safe for them to be in. If the State of Michigan is going to continue to use the state's jails to house the mentally ill then we the Sheriffs' Offices need to be given the resources to properly take care of them. The Marquette County Jail was never designed or intended to be a facility to hold the mentally ill. Our Jail is too small and out dated to begin to hold the mentally ill as they need to be separated from the inmates and there is simply no room. We often take the mentally ill to the hospital on a Psyc. Petition only to have the Doctors from the

Psyc. Unit refuses to take them (Mainly due to lack of bed space or Violence Factor) and they are returned to us with an “O.K. to Lodge” response. These individuals are a danger to themselves, and other inmates and corrections staff and a huge liability for the County of Marquette by us housing them in the Marquette County Jail.

We manage them by placing them on a 24 hour watch which is very staff intensive and requires us to place extra deputies on each shift which is very costly to the county. We do cell checks every 15 minutes, again very staff intensive in a linear jail. They are placed in Suicide Smocks if they are a threat to themselves and then placed into an Observation Cell. The next step is to “chain them to the floor” and place a helmet on their heads and surround them with mats and mattresses to keep them from harming themselves. Our medical and mental health workers evaluate the individual and petition them to the hospital for evaluation, and sometimes they are admitted to the Psyc. Unit and sometimes we get them back and start the whole process all over again.

We have had **14 Suicide Attempts** in our jail from January of 2012 until this date. Seven (7) by Hanging, Five (5) by Cutting, One (1) Drug Overdose, and One (1) Drowning, **NONE OF THEM SUCCESSFUL.**

Let me now turn your attention to the issue of Mentally Ill Inmate Transports. The Sheriffs Offices and other Law Enforcement Agencies are amongst the smallest in the State of Michigan, with the smallest budgets, yet we have to travel the greatest distances (Over 500 plus miles from the west end of the U.P.) to bring mentally ill inmates to Ypsilanti, Caro, and anywhere else downstate for Forensic Exams and sometimes just placement for the extremely violent mentally ill inmates. These transports involve two (2) Deputies traveling two (2) days in a patrol car downstate with a mentally ill inmate in the back seat in addition to paying for their meals, a hotel room, gas and wear and tear on a patrol car. These Deputies are also unavailable to respond to criminal complaints and other calls for service for the two days they are gone.

I would like to propose a **SOLUTION TO BOTH OF THESE PROBLEMS.**

I propose a Public/Private Partnership involving the Marquette County Sheriffs Office, MGH/Duke Life point Hospital, Pathways, Great Lakes Recovery, and the State of Michigan.

We the Sheriffs Office would provide the facility to create a “Secure” Psyc. Unit within the Marquette County Community Corrections Center (Currently a Secure Minimum Security Corrections Center).

MGH/Duke Life point Hospital provide the trained Psyc. Unit Staff, Nurses and Doctors.

Pathways and Great Lakes Recovery to provide treatment programs and options.

The State of Michigan provides “Contracted” (as needed) Forensic Examiners, Psychiatrists and Psychologists.

I am more than ready, willing and able to sit down with all the above referenced providers to further discuss and develop a strategic plan to allow this Public/Private Partnership to come to fruition, at any place and time that is convenient for all those involved.

Once again, THANK YOU for allowing my comments and for coming to the Upper Peninsula to listen.