


HB's 4129-4132 "Medical Frail" package

As a crisis counselor in the prison system in the state of Alabama, I had a chance to witness personally the lack of support for the elderly in the prison system. The elderly population in the state prisons are growing at a rapid speed. For most state prisons, the consequence of have a significant amount of elderly inmates is money, more and more of it every year. Health care for aging prisoners costs far more than it does for younger ones. Corrections departments across the country report that health care for older prisoners costs between four and eight times what it does for younger prisoners. One thing I also noticed is a steady increase in the rate of older adults entering prison today. I have seen people who came into the prison system in their 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s which most prison are not accommodating to the elderly. Prisoners have much a higher rates of cardiac disease, high blood pressure, hepatitis C, diabetes and other chronic diseases than the general population. Prison were design for people from the ages of 18 to 55, and who were able to walk, and take care of themselves. Prison is a particularly treacherous place to get old. Getting to a top bunk is difficult for many aging prisoners, as is going up the stairs. Hearing loss, dementia and general frailty can make it difficult to comprehend or obey rules. Being infirm in an institution full of young predators can make older prisoners vulnerable. I have seen a lot of the young ones take advantage of the elderly. When aging prisoners get to the end of their sentences, corrections officials often have a hard time placing them, even if they look beyond their state. Private nursing homes do not want to take elderly offenders who were murderers or sex offenders. MHHI would bring relief to the corrections officials as well provide safety and care to the elderly and inmates who can not take care of themselves. MHHI has a duty to implement the sentences and orders of the courts, to protect the public; and to provide long term care for offenders. We will serve the inmates requiring preventive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative nursing care services for non- acute inmate. Over the years there has been a lot of challenges for the health care of inmates. Most of the inmates who are serving a life sentence are frail and aged, who are bedridden, often using canes, walkers, or wheelchairs. Stays are relatively long, the majority for life. no longer require hospitalization. These inmates are in long-term recovery from acute illnesses. As a profession, corrections work is one of the most stressful in law enforcement. Officers must remain continually alert during eight to 16-hour shifts to avoid being attacked or killed by the offenders that they supervise. The intensity of these environments often prompts officers to shut down emotionally, reducing their ability to function effectively within the institution. Officers have a lot to deal with and taking care of a ill inmate is the last thing on their list. This Bill is very important to MHHI because without this bill MHHI cannot service this population. At MHHI, we promote the dignity and self-worth of all of our patients/inmates, and strive to give them excellent quality of life, as defined by the State of Michigan, and government individually and as a group.

Sincerely,

Annamarie Till



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C.E.O

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