



**April 21, 2014**

Michigan Disability Housing Work Group (MDHWG) is a coalition of organizations throughout Michigan that believes in and encourages inclusive communities that:

1. Are diverse and welcoming to all
2. Assure freedom of choice
3. Offer the housing and support options people with disabilities need to live where they choose

Background:

In the first half of the twentieth century many people with disabilities lived in massive state-run institutions. In the 1960s and 1970s, the deinstitutionalization movement focused on getting individuals out of institutions and trying to develop community-based services/ facilities to meet their needs. These "community-based" facilities offered little improvement over the original institutions. Over time families sought community inclusion and elected to take care of loved ones at home. Supported independent living programs began popping up. These programs supported people to live in their own homes in the community, either alone or with one or two other residents of their choice. The core idea that people with disabilities should make their own decisions about major things like where to live and what to do during the day was working a quiet revolution in the field's thinking about residential arrangements. If Michigan is going to continue on with this revolution and fulfill the promises of person-centered planning and self-determination and add the provisions of the Olmstead Supreme Court decision(see Michigan's Eager v. Engler), then the system needs to find ways to help people with disabilities get the supports they need in more independent residential settings.

Member Organizations

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Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living • Capitol Area Center for Independent Living • Community Housing Network, Inc.  
Disability Advocates of Kent County • Disability Network Lakeshore • Disability Network Mid Michigan • Disability Network Southwest Michigan  
Disability Network Michigan • Michigan Developmental Disability Council • Michigan Disability Rights Coalition  
Southwest Counseling Solutions • Superior Alliance for Independent Living • The Disability Network • United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan

## Barriers and Challenges

- The Mini-Institution trend
- Minimal resources and supports for moving out of group homes and nursing facilities
- Little enforcement of person-centered planning requirements in some parts of Michigan
- Most group and nursing home residents still have little awareness of their rights and options, including the right to move to more independent living situations.
- High rental costs price people who live on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) out of the housing market
- Belief that service providers cannot use Medicaid or Community Mental Health funding to meet any of these costs
- The availability of in-home services is improving, but they are still less easily available than supervised settings.
- The person-centered planning and supports coordination processes rarely focus on developing concrete steps for moving to more independent residential settings.

## Position

The Michigan Disability Housing Work Group believes that people with disabilities should be able to live in independent inclusive community-based housing with any needed supports. That group homes, adult foster care, nursing facilities, and congregate homes can limit a person's self-determination and quality of life therefore; the Work Group believes and advocates that Michigan must do the following:

- Curb the trend toward development of mini-institutions and unlicensed facilities.
- Provide navigators to help people get out of group homes like those currently available to people coming out of nursing homes
- Develop and allocate funding and support for education about alternative living arrangements and to move from group and nursing homes to more independent community-based settings.
- Increase the stock of safe, affordable, accessible housing statewide and make rental subsidies available to support people with disabilities' ability to live in the community. Advocate for these value and policies in the Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) Qualified Allocation Plans (QAP); National Housing Trust Fund; Michigan Housing and Community Development Fund; and through HUD 811 & 202 applications. )

- Assure that competent, well-trained in-home services are widely available, home care workers need higher wages, better benefits, the availability of high quality training, and more respect for the important jobs they do.
- Provide people with disabilities living in supervised settings, and their families and advocates, with information about the risks and disadvantages of institutional living situations and about the possibilities and supports available for living in an independent setting.
- Work with MDHWG and the DD Council to develop a statewide grant project focused on information and advocacy to educate people with disabilities, their families, advocates and service providers, policymakers on all levels, and the general public.

Send comments or questions to:

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