

TUSCOLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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At a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the County of Tuscola, State of Michigan, held on August 14, 2025, with the meeting called to order at 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: John Goodchild, Thomas Bardwell, Kim Vaughan, Bill Lutz
Matt Koch

ABSENT: None

The following resolution was offered by Commissioner Lutz and
seconded by Commissioner Koch:

RESOLUTION 2025-09

Resolution of Tuscola County Opposing the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' Plan to Competitively Bid Michigan's Pre-Paid Inpatient Health Plans

WHEREAS, the public mental health system in Michigan is based on the Federal Community Mental Health Centers Act of 1963 and grounded in the Michigan Mental Health Code, Public Act of 258 of 1974, which created a state and county partnership for community mental health and related safety net services; and

WHEREAS, the State of Michigan is required by MCL 330.1116 "...to promote and maintain an adequate and appropriate system of community mental health services programs" (CMHSPs) and "shift primary responsibility for the direct delivery of public mental health services from the state to a community mental health services program..."; and

WHEREAS, Tuscola County established a partnership with the state for public mental health services and has overseen a community mental health services program (CMHSP) provider system in this area for more than 50 years; and

WHEREAS, this arrangement guarantees that shared state and county mental health policy objectives are accountable to their communities and their elected representatives. This structure also ensures that

resource and care decisions are ultimately subject to oversight through public board governance, local accountability and transparency; and

WHEREAS, Tuscola County Community Mental Health Authority was subsequently created by the Tuscola County Board of Commissioners as evidenced in the 1996 resolution citing “their desires to improve the quality of mental services for residents” and “determined that the Community Mental Health Structure provided in MCL 330.1205 would provide the flexibility necessary to better serve county residents in need of service.”; and

WHEREAS, nearly 1,000 Tuscola County residents and their families with serious mental illness, intellectual/developmental disabilities, co-occurring substance use disorders, and children with severe emotional disturbances depend on the public mental health system and its community partners for both acute and long term supports and services; and

WHEREAS, Tuscola County supports a CMHSP safety net that retains local accountability in governance, administration, funding, and service delivery focused on the unique needs of the community which allows residents and families to have direct access to their board member representatives through participation in local constituent processes and public board meetings under the Open Meetings Act; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has announced its intention to use a procurement process to upend decades of state policy and disrupt the longstanding relationships between CMHSPs, providers and the communities they serve. Thus, eliminating county CMHSPs from any role in the governance, administration and funding for public mental health services and potentially transferring these responsibilities to commercial entities with no accountability to local communities. MDHHS remains resolute in this position despite many stakeholders, including individual service recipients, advocates, local officials, and providers expressing significant concerns about the potential impact of a competitive procurement process and potential for privatization on the person-centered, recovery-oriented approach that has been cultivated under the public system; and

THEREFORE, BE IT UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT, Tuscola County strongly opposes any MDHHS Procurement Plan that will compromise the state and county partnership for public mental health services, reduce the role of county based CMHSPs in the governance, administration, funding, and delivery of services to our most vulnerable residents, and that are contrary to the principles of local governance, oversight and accountability to the community; and

BE IT FURTHER UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT, Tuscola County encourages the administration and the legislature to continue to support the carve out of specialty behavioral health services to the CMHSP system as permitted in existing federal and state laws, and policies that improve healthcare integration directly at the point of consumer contact, produce more sustainable outcomes, and ensure that resource and care decisions reflect the interests of all public stakeholders; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, copies of this resolution be provided to Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Senator Kevin Daley (26th District), Senator Dan Lauwers (25th District), Representative Gregory Alexander (98th District), Representative Matt Bierlein (97th District), Representative Phil Green (67th District), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director Elizabeth Hertel, and the Michigan Association of Counties.

