

Mount Pleasant MHI
Letters of Support

October 26, 2009

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EFR EMPLOYEE & FAMILY RESOURCES

October 19, 2009

Ron Mullen
Superintendent
Mount Pleasant Mental Health Institute
1200 East Washington St.
Mount Pleasant, IA 52641

Mr. Mullen –

I am writing this letter to share with you how necessary the residential substance abuse treatment services offered at the Iowa Residential Treatment Center (IRTC) – Mt. Pleasant are to clients served by Employee & Family Resources (EFR). EFR has two full time substance abuse assessment counselors who work with clients incarcerated at the Polk County jail. Many of these clients need the intensive treatment services offered by IRTC, and EFR staff has established an excellent working relationship with IRTC professional staff through years of collaboration. During fiscal year 2009 alone, EFR staff made over 250 referrals to IRTC.

Elimination of the services offered at IRTC – Mt. Pleasant would prove a hardship to many of our clients. I hope the Governor's Task Force understands how vital the residential substance abuse treatment services offered at IRTC are to lowans in need, and does not eliminate them or decrease financial support in any way.

Sincerely,

Harry Teel, LMHC, CEAP
Director, Substance Abuse Services
(515) 471-2344

Cc: Kollin Alford, IRTC Program Director

Our full attention. Your full potential.



October 1, 2009

Mental Health Institute
Attn: Deb Moeller
1200 E. Washington
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

Dear Ms Moeller:

I recently read of the state of Iowa's plans to determine which of four mental health institutions may be considered for closure. This letter is sent to support the work of the Mental Health Institute in Mt Pleasant, Iowa.

From 1999 through 2006 I was employed at Substance Abuse Services Center (SASC) in Dubuque, Iowa, eventually being assigned as the Residential Treatment Supervisor for Stepping Stone Halfway House. In this capacity, I had the opportunity to work closely with MHI in Mt Pleasant and the staff who frequently referred clients completing inpatient treatment but needing aftercare services in a halfway house. As the HWH Treatment Supervisor I was responsible for reviewing all referrals and working with the social workers and docs from MHI to determine aftercare needs and appropriateness for placement in our program. I found the staff from MHI to be very professional, dedicated, and knowledgeable of the complicated issues of the co-occurring disorders of mental health and substance abuse. I left the SASC organization in 2006 to pursue other opportunities and, unfortunately, shortly after my departure, Stepping Stone closed its doors. This has left the eastern part of the state with one less, very valuable, dual diagnosis recovery house. Therefore, as the ONLY dual diagnosis inpatient treatment facility in the state of Iowa, that is also the smallest and more cost efficient, MHI in Mt Pleasant has proven to be an extremely valuable facility and should be considered TOO valuable to close.

In closing, I recognize the state has some tough decisions to make, in the coming months. Keeping at the forefront, the consumers in Iowa who suffer from substance abuse and mental health disorders and the qualified staff at MHI in Mt. Pleasant who have been providing exceptional care, since the beginning, should make the job easier.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kimberly A. Shird, MsEd, LCPC
Clinical Supervisor

FHN FAMILY COUNSELING CENTER - JO DAVIESS COUNTY

300 Summit Street, Galena, Illinois 61036
Phone: 815-777-2836 Fax: 815-777-2849

Fifth Judicial District Department of Correctional Services

Administrative Office, 604 Locust Street, Equitable Building, Suite 317, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
515-280-4220 • FAX 515-280-4259

Chester J. Culver, Governor

Sally Kreamer, Director

Patty Judge, Lieutenant Governor

Michael J. King, Chairperson

To Whom It May Concern:

IRTC at Mt. Pleasant is one of the primary treatment placements used by the 5th Judicial District Department of Correctional Services. And I have the distinct pleasure of talking directly to probationers as they return to the Polk County Jail after completing their treatment experience.

My assessment of the program after talking to people who have received services there is that the staff is extremely knowledgeable, skilled and professional. Further, the IRTC staff works well with the probation and parole staff to assure that PO's receive comprehensive discharge summaries and information regarding aftercare placement in order to best serve the individuals in their quest for a clean and sober lifestyle.

If the State were to close this facility, the Fifth District, as well as the entire state, would lose an extremely valuable and necessary service. A successful treatment for substance abuse is key in the lives of a majority of our probationers and parolees in order to effect change and assure the public's safety.

It is my hope that none of the facilities will need to be closed, but in particular, Mt. Pleasant serves a great many people. Please consider the importance of their mission in the state of Iowa.

Cara D. Stewart, PPO II
Fifth Judicial District
Department of Correctional Services

Mission Statement:

We Protect the Public, Employees, and Offenders from Victimization.

<http://FifthDCS.com>

SunRise Enterprise, LLC

Phone: 319/385-2910 Fax: 319/ 385-2913

October 12, 2009

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I'm writing in support and asking that you continue the program at the Mt. Pleasant Mental Health Institute. As a former employee, I am aware of the difficulty that the State faces in a budgetary process. It is my opinion that closing the Mt. Pleasant unit would have dire consequences.

Currently, I am in private practice as a Psychiatric Social Worker at SunRise in Burlington and Mt. Pleasant. We refer and receive referrals from the MHI on a regular basis. As local hospitals close beds to psychiatric patients, it is becoming more and more difficult to coordinate care and provide a continuum of services. The MHI provides a valuable role and offers unique opportunity for clients needing psychiatric services as well as the very difficult care for patients having dual diagnosis issues. With the State's only real option for substance abuse care, the Mt. Pleasant unit fills a very valuable need in the areas of drug and alcohol treatment.

I understand and appreciate that the State has to weigh and balance financial responsibility with the needs of its citizens. In the area of mental health it is often the case where the most critically ill patient has the most limited resources and opportunities for treatment. The Mt. Pleasant MHI has always delivered high quality service at a very cost effective "price point". The low staff to patient ratio at the Mt. Pleasant MHI represents a delicate balance of efficiency vs. uncompromising professional standards. Attesting to the high level of services delivered is the MHI's remarkable record of maintaining accreditation by outside surveyors.

In closing, I do greatly encourage you to continue the operation at the Mt. Pleasant MHI. I believe the Mt. Pleasant program provides a truly valuable service to our clients and the citizens of the State of Iowa.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide you with additional information or answer other questions.

Sincerely,



Randy Cermak, L.I.S.W.

/js

1405 N Broadway
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
319-385-2910
Fax 319-385-2913

606 Spring St.
Burlington, IA 52601
319-753-2400
Fax 319-385-2913

2925 Cedar St. Ste.2
Muscatine, IA 52761
563-263-7410
Fax: 319-385-29113

Financial-P.O.Box 244
Morning Sun, IA 52640
319-385-2910
Fax 319-385-2913

September 23, 2009

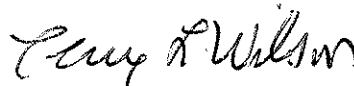
To Whom it May Concern:

Re: Closing of MHI

As an Associate District Judge sitting in Marion County I handle many mental and substance abuse commitments. I would offer the following comments:

1. We have a very difficult time finding placement for treatment and losing MHI Mt. Pleasant would only increase our problems.
2. MHI Mt. Pleasant is one of few places that handle dual diagnoses in our area.
3. Closing MHI Mt. Pleasant would cause our sheriff to transport respondents greater distances which means more money and time expended.
4. MHI is one of the few treatment centers available for those with no insurance coverage.
5. MHI is well used since there is usually a waiting list.
6. I recently had a respondent that had serious problems and I considered a danger. I could find no placement for him so I had to release him to outpatient care and two days later he committed an assault with injury.
7. My observations are that there is a drastic increase in mental and substance commitments in the last few years. I believe this is not the time to be closing any treatment facilities.

Feel free to contact me for further information.



Terry L. Wilson
Associate District Court
214 E. Main
Knoxville, IA 50138
641 828-2252

Mr. Ron E. Mullen
Mental Health Institute
1200 E. Washington St.
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

10-1-2009

Mr. Mullen,

This is a similar letter to the one Dr Boxleiter e-mailed to Ro Foege. I hope this is sufficient for your cause.

Our position is that we do not want ANY of the MHI's to close in Iowa.

Best wishes,



Janet Bales, RNC
Office Manager
Medical Associates – Department of Psychiatry
200 Mercy Drive – Suite 201
Dubuque, IA 52001



MEDICAL ASSOCIATES
C L I N I C

Ron E. Mullen
Mental Health Institute
1200 E. Washington St.
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
Oct. 1, 2009

Dear Sir,

I attended the meeting at Independence MHI on Sept. 28 but had to leave before speaking. In spite of that, I appreciated having had the opportunity and am happy to summarize here what I had planned to say. I have already sent this information to Ro Foege but thought that the information may be of interest to you as well.

As you are aware, there is a severe shortage of mental health beds and psychiatrists in Iowa. The reasons for this are many, but largely reimbursement. As inpatient units have downsized or even closed, our unit at Mercy Hospital in Dubuque has been admitting patients from further and further away. At many points during the last year, our mental health unit has been full and we have had to refer local patients out of the community. This is in spite of the fact that 20 to 40% of the patient on our unit are from outside of our anticipated catchment area. The day of the MHI meeting I had just admitted a patient from Pella. I have had calls from as far as Sioux City and have admitted patients from Keokuk, Burlington, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, Des Moines, Oelwein, etc. This creates the domino effect of transferring patients all over Iowa to be treated by unfamiliar providers. If there were more, not fewer, beds in the MHI system, these overflow patients could be more easily accommodated and not as readily take beds that would otherwise be available to patients in their own catchment areas. I believe that this would reduce the overall number of inter-hospital transfers and provide more consistent and higher quality care to the patients of Iowa.

Few options are available for the long term placement of many of the states most impaired residents, especially children and the elderly. Due to long waiting list at the MHI facilities, patients have very long and very expensive stays in local hospitals. These long stays also limit the availability of beds to other local patients who would likely be hospitalized for much shorter periods. These patients are often sent out of the community but due again to the overall bed shortage, it is time consuming to find appropriate emergency placement. These patients, who are generally in crisis, may wait for 12 hours or longer in ill equipped emergency rooms before a bed can be found.

It is a simple fact that some mental illness take weeks to months to stabilize and that some patients will never be able to function out of the supportive structure provided by a

facility like MHI. Few patient or community hospitals can afford to provide this level of treatment on the long term.

In addition, I am aware that the state is looking to close a facility in order to consolidate services with the intent of not loosing beds. Unfortunately, I have seen this sort of situation many times over the years and recognize that such changes are only the prelude to further change. The loss of the Iowa Mental Health Institutes would be a tragic blow to the state and its citizens, especially to those least able to care for their own needs. The domino effect that I have seen so often in the past could easily lead to further decline in services through out the state and increased disability, morbidity and mortality from untreated mental illness.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Boxleiter MD

BENTON COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICE
Central Point of Coordination
303 1ST AVE
Vinton, Iowa 52349
319 472-4743 or FAX 319 472-4744
e-mail — bcss@www.mebbs.com

October 2, 2009

Ron E Mullen, Superintendent
Mental Health Institution
1200 E Washington St
Mt. Pleasant, IA 62541

RE: MHI Task Force visit

Dear Mr. Mullen and MHI Task Force,

Please provide this letter to the MHI Task Force as a letter of support to keep the MHI in Mt Pleasant from potential closing.

- 1) Closing psychiatric beds is a huge mistake as there is already a shortage of beds in both the private and the public facilities across the state of Iowa. Mental health commitments are increasing and many times we are unable to find beds to meet those needs especially for persons who need further dual diagnosis treatment.

We need more beds rather than less – we need providers who are willing to serve the increasingly difficult people we are seeing today before the state closes the MHIs.

- 2) Consideration, and hopefully recommendation, must be given to expanding services at ALL the mental health institutes to meet the ever increasing mental health needs in the state. As mentioned before, we are seeing clients that have increasingly serious behavioral and sexual acting out that are not being adequately addressed in the community. Thus making it extremely important to have facilities that are equipped to deal with these issues on a broader scale across the state.

Thank you for consideration of my comments. For many more reasons than I have identified, there would be a huge negative impact to Iowa residents if the closing of Mt Pleasant MHI or any other MHI occurs.

Sincerely,



Mary Williams, Director

asac

AREA SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNCIL

Phone: (319) 390-4611

Fax: (319) 390-4381

3601 16th Avenue S.W.

Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

www.asac.us

Mental Health Institute
Attn: Deb Moeller
1200 E. Washington
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

October 5, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

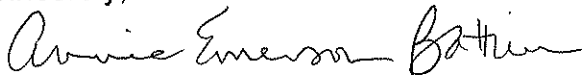
I urge you to continue to support all of Iowa's Mental Health Institutes, particularly in Mount Pleasant. The Mental Health Institute in Mt. Pleasant provides services that are vital for Iowans with psychiatric disorders and co-occurring substance abuse. This is one of very few programs designed to serve this population, which tends to require intensive support throughout their lives.

In my role supervising a dual diagnosis program in Cedar Rapids, I refer clients to MHI when our program is at capacity or when a client requires a more structured environment. I don't know what we would do with many of these folks without that option. We have also served clients referred from this program and they report receiving quality, beneficial care. I have been impressed with the professional, experienced staff at Mt. Pleasant's MHI.

Statewide, there is an increasing need for residential options for psychiatric clients. Hospitals and substance abuse facilities have decreased the number of beds, which leads to long waiting lists, referrals to programs far from their community, homeless shelters turning people away and other barriers to accessing services. Without the Mental Health Institute these problems would only increase and clients may end up in the criminal justice system instead. This helps neither the client nor the taxpayer.

Please consider the benefits of maintaining these important programs.

Sincerely,



Annie Emerson-Battien, LMHC, CADC
Asst. Director, Adult Residential Services
Area Substance Abuse Council



**AREA SUBSTANCE
ABUSE COUNCIL**

Phone: (319) 390-4611

Fax: (319) 390-4381

3601 16th Avenue S.W.

Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

www.asac.us

September 23, 2009

Mental Health Institute
Attn: Deb Moeller
1200 E. Washington
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa 52641

Governor's Office
C/O Institution Task Force
State Capitol Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing a letter of support to keep all Mental Health Institutes in Iowa open but specifically the Mt. Pleasant Mental Health Institute. Mt. Pleasant provides quality services to a very high risk population that is already underserved due to the lack of available treatment in the state. I am the Director of the Area Substance Abuse Council's (ASAC) Adult Residential programs and work closely with the Mt. Pleasant programs. The experienced staff working these programs contributes greatly to the effectiveness they have with co-occurring clients and the quality of treatment they provide. I almost always have a very lengthy wait list for residential services and make referrals to Mt. Pleasant as a result of this. I also see many clients with severe mental health issues and look to Mt. Pleasant's programs to assist. The staff at Mt. Pleasant are easy to work with and very accommodating both to other professionals and clients, making this a top choice when referrals are needed.

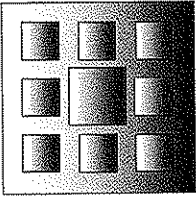
My staff and I toured the Mt. Pleasant facilities earlier this year as a result of the work we do with these programs. It was a great experience and only validated what we already knew and that it what terrific work they do for a very needed population. Closing such a facility would have a huge impact on the communities in this area in regards to crime, hospitalizations, homelessness and infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. We are already limited with the number of psych beds in the state and this is creating significant issues in treatment delivery.

In addition to making referrals to Mt. Pleasant I have accepted many referrals from them for ongoing treatment needs. I have seen and heard from clients what great work they do in rehabilitating individuals and offering hope. I completely support the Mt. Pleasant Mental Health Institute and feel it would not be in the best interest of the state and its taxpayers to close this facility. If you have questions feel free to contact me at 319-390-4611 ext. 161.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Reitzler".

Kelly Reitzler, LMHC, CADC
Director of Adult Residential Services



Community Health Centers of Southern Iowa

■ Behavioral Health Centers of Southern Iowa ■

October 15, 2009

Ron E. Mullen, Superintendent
Mental Health Institution
1200 E. Washington St.
Mt. Pleasant, Ia. 52641

Superintendent Mullen:

I am Director and COO of Behavioral Health Centers Of Southern Iowa (BHCSI) directly serving six counties in South and Southeast Iowa. We have relied on your Institution for years as a major part of our ability to provide the needed behavior health services to the people in our communities. It would be devastating to our area of this state if you were to close your doors. We are remote, impoverished and rural with few resources. What would we do? You have our utmost support.

Please note that my full intention was to attend the hearing before the Task Force on the 26 day of October. Due to recent circumstances, I am unable to attend. I hope that this letter and/or my feelings regarding the issue will make its way to the Task Force and will help in some way for them to make the right recommendation and decision.

Wishing you the best,

Dave Hook, Director/COO
Behavioral Health Centers of Southern Iowa

Governor's Office
c/o Institute Task Force
State Capitol Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to address the possibility of the closing of the Mental Health Institute in Mt. Pleasant. The Mt. Pleasant MHI offers a vital service, not only by serving the mentally ill in southeast Iowa, but also in that it is the only state facility that offers both substance abuse and dual diagnosis treatment. The clients in the substance abuse and dual diagnosis programs are referred from all 99 counties in Iowa. Both of these programs often run at full capacity with a waiting list.

The substance abuse program's daily capacity is 50 and the dual diagnosis daily capacity is 15. The substance abuse program served a total of 484 clients and the dual diagnosis program served 109 in 2008. Both programs are coed and admit voluntary, involuntary and district court ordered clients. Both programs provide intense programming to help clients be able to return to be productive members of communities. This clearly demonstrates the value of the Mt. Pleasant facility. Plus, as the availability of mental health and substance abuse treatment decreases across the state, it is highly important to keep this, and the other 3 Mental Health Institutes, open.

As unemployment rates grow, it is also important to consider the impact that closing the Mt. Pleasant MHI would have on our local economy. The Mt. Pleasant area has seen several large employers, such as CECO, Riverside Paper, Bluebird, Motorola, Cargill, and Celestica close their doors in recent years. Closing the MHI would mean the loss of 103 jobs in our community.

It is also important to note that with rising unemployment rates, substance abuse also increases. The current economy is contributing to the need for this facility.

When the time comes to appropriate funding for the state Mental Health Institutes, please strongly advocate for the continued support of the Mt. Pleasant Mental Health Institute.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Pidgeon

Iowa Wesleyan

COLLEGE

22 October, 2009

Governor's Office
C/o Institute Task Force
State Capitol Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to address the impact of closing the Mental Health Institute in Mount Pleasant. The Mount Pleasant MHI offers a vital service, not only by serving the mentally ill in southeast Iowa, but also in that it is the only state facility that offers both substance abuse and dual diagnosis treatment. The clients in the substance abuse and dual diagnosis programs are referred from all 99 counties in Iowa. Both of these programs often run at full capacity with a waiting list.

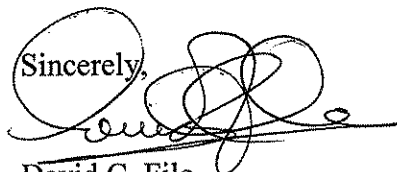
The substance abuse program's daily capacity is 50 and the dual diagnosis daily capacity is 15. The substance abuse program served a total of 484 clients and the dual diagnosis program served 109 in 2008. Both programs are coed and admit voluntary, involuntary and district court ordered clients. Both programs provide intense programming to help clients be able to return to be productive member of communities. This clearly demonstrates the value of the Mount Pleasant facility. Plus, as the availability of mental health and substance abuse treatment decreases across the state, it is highly important to keep this, and the other three mental health institutes open.

Furthermore as the only facility located in a community that is also home to an independent higher-education institution, such action would eliminate existing partnerships and programs shared between the Mt. Pleasant facility and Iowa Wesleyan College. Collateral damage would be inflicted on the College's sociology, criminal justice, human services and Psychology programs with the loss of such a unique resource for field study – which would thereby extend the impact of such potential action into the areas of training and preparation of the existing and future workforce.

It is also important to note that the current economy is contributing to the need for this facility.

When the time comes to appropriate funding for the state Mental Health Institutes, please strongly advocate for the continued support of the Mount Pleasant Mental Health Institute.

Sincerely,

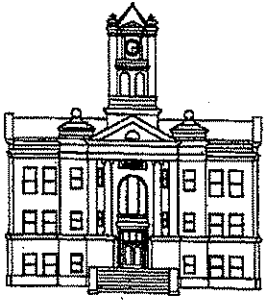


David C. File

Associate Vice President

The Campaign for Iowa Wesleyan: Transforming Our Future

601 North Main Street Mount Pleasant, Iowa 52641-1398 800.582.2383 www.iwc.edu



Monroe County Board of Supervisors

10 BENTON AVENUE EAST
(641) 932-7706

ALBIA, IOWA 52531-1943

FAX: (641) 932-5905

Ron E. Mullen, Superintendent
Mt. Pleasant Mental Health Institution
1200 E. Washington St.
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa 52641

Superintendent Mullen,

We regret that the Monroe County Board of Supervisors cannot attend the Task Force meeting on October 26th at your facility. The Board however would like to submit this letter of support for keeping the Mt. Pleasant Facility open. In discussions with our CPC {Katie Fisher} and our Sheriff {Dan Johnson} The County's position is that closing the Mt. Pleasant institution would severely impact this part of the state in providing mental health and substance abuse treatment and services. It has been our experience that there are not enough beds as it is let alone closing a facility. Where are people supposed to go? There is more to running a facility than just dollars and cents, it's about providing service. Service to individuals who have problems that only experienced professionals can treat. These Institutions were built for a reason and to close one would be counterproductive because it only shifts costs and doesn't save money. In closing, please think long and hard about closing a facility, especially Mt. Pleasant because it really does provide much needed services. I apologize for not being there in person, but our Sheriff plans on attending. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Monroe County Board of Supervisors



AMY BECKER PHOTOGRAPHY

Governor's Office
c/o Institute Task Force
State Capitol Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to address the possibility of the closing of the Mental Health Institute in Mt. Pleasant. The Mt. Pleasant MHI offers a vital service, not only by serving the mentally ill in southeast Iowa, but also in that it is the only state facility that offers both substance abuse and dual diagnosis treatment. The clients in the substance abuse and dual diagnosis programs are referred from all 99 counties in Iowa. Both of these programs often run at full capacity with a waiting list.

The substance abuse program's daily capacity is 50 and the dual diagnosis daily capacity is 15. The substance abuse program served a total of 484 clients and the dual diagnosis program served 109 in 2008. Both programs are coed and admit voluntary, involuntary and district court ordered clients. Both programs provide intense programming to help clients be able to return to be productive members of communities. This clearly demonstrates the value of the Mt. Pleasant facility. Plus, as the availability of mental health and substance abuse treatment decreases across the state, it is highly important to keep this, and the other 3 Mental Health Institutes, open.

As unemployment rates grow, it is also important to consider the impact that closing the Mt. Pleasant MHI would have on our local economy. The Mt. Pleasant area has seen several large employers, such as CECO, Riverside Paper, Bluebird, Motorola, Cargill, and Celestica close their doors in recent years. Closing the MHI would mean the loss of 103 jobs in our community.

It is also important to note that with rising unemployment rates, substance abuse also increases. The current economy is contributing to the need for this facility.

When the time comes to appropriate funding for the state Mental Health Institutes, please strongly advocate for the continued support of the Mt. Pleasant Mental Health Institute.

Sincerely,



Governor's Office
C/o Institute Task Force
State Capitol Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

To Whom It May Concern:

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As unemployment rates grow, it also important to consider the impact that closing the Mount Pleasant MHI would have on our local economy. The Mount Pleasant area has seen several large employers, such as CECO, Riverside Paper, Bluebird, Motorola, Cargill and Celestica close their doors in recent years. Closing the MHI would mean the loss of 103 jobs in our community.

It is also important to note that with rising unemployment rates, substance abuse also increases. The current economy is contributing to the need for this facility.

When the time comes to appropriate the funding for the state Mental Health Institutes, please strongly advocated for the continued support of the Mount Pleasant Mental Health Institute.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Thomas Wenstrand'.

Thomas Wenstrand

October 25, 2009

Mental Health Institute Restructuring Commission

c/o Mount Pleasant Mental Health Institute

Mount Pleasant , Iowa

Dear Commission Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in this process. I apologize for not being able to be there in person, but could not find a way to reschedule patients from my clinic in order to make the trip.

I am a third generation Iowa mental health professional. My grandparents came to Iowa in the early 1960s to serve at the Cherokee Mental Health Institute as director and head of psychological services respectively. My mother, herself a therapist and my grandparents raised me with the knowledge that we lived in a visionary state, one that had seen and appreciated the importance of public mental health services years ahead of others. Iowa, I was told, is a state where our leaders saw the wisdom and shouldered the responsibility to care for the mentally ill in a compassionate and intelligent way.

As I have personally worked as a psychiatrist for the past decade, I believe firmly that their version of Iowa is indeed true. We continue to seek the best care for all our citizens regardless of their station in life or the circumstances of their birth.

It is with great surprise, then, that I find that our leaders have sent you on your current errand. After watching the diminishing capacity of our mental health system steadily over time, I had hopes that our leadership would understand that a major investment is necessary to get back on track. I had believed that they understood that it shows greater wisdom to provide help to people in hospitals and clinics than in prisons and jails. Knowing who you are, members of the commission, and what your backgrounds are, I need not cite the studies supporting this idea nor lecture you on the merits of providing compassionate, appropriate and abundant mental health services.

Much has been made of the idea that in our modern era, families are more able to travel further distances to participate in the recovery of their ill relatives. I would hope that as you travel our state visiting our Institutes, you discover that the distance remains great and the burden of travel large. I will remind you of two proven facts: that a patient's risk of relapse (especially if the patients are children) is dramatically improved if their family is involved in their treatment and that in times of economic crunch, the single largest reason for failure to keep appointments at a mental health facility is lack of up-front cash for gas money to make the trip.

What I would ask you, then, is this: to return to the leadership of our state and tell them that your errand is impossible. That we cannot afford to close a single mental health facility in our state and least

of all our Mental Health Institutes. That especially in this time of economic crisis, visionary leaders need to understand the direct economic impact upon our state should mental health services become less available. Indeed, untreated depression alone is the single largest treatable cause of lost income and poor job performance.

I ask you to speak from your experience and from your heart and tell them the truth. Invest in our future. Continue our tradition of excellence and compassion. Keep our Mental Health Institutes open and active.

Sincerely,

Christopher Okiishi, MD

Diplomat of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology

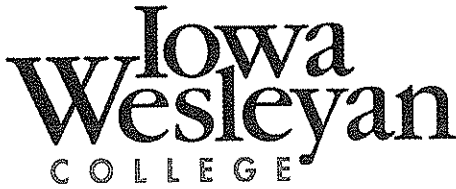
Hillcrest Family Services

Washington Community Mental Health Center

2175 Lexington Blvd.

Washington, Iowa 52353

319-653-6161



Iowa Wesleyan College Nursing Division
Petition In Favor of Keeping the Mt. Pleasant MHI Open
October 22, 2009

Dear Iowa Legislature:

The nursing professors and students at Iowa Wesleyan College would like to express our strong and sincere concern about the possibility of closing one of the Mental Health Institutes. Instead, our state is in need of more mental health services. The MHI located in Mt. Pleasant is significantly needed for acute psychiatric health care in surrounding regions, substance abuse rehabilitation, and dual diagnosis treatment. In relation to our college, the Mt. Pleasant MHI has been an essential and valuable educational resource to our nursing program. The nursing students in the psychiatric-mental health care course attend clinical at this MHI, and this is the primary clinical site for this semester. We have over 30 nursing students in each class, and there are not near enough psychiatric clinical sites available to support this educational requirement. Without the Mt. Pleasant MHI being available to the Iowa Wesleyan College nursing program, I am uncertain how the psychiatric nursing course requirements would be achieved, and that could negatively impact the graduation of students in our BSN program. This is even a greater concern, given the current status of our nursing shortage. **Please keep the Mt. Pleasant Mental Health Institute open ...this clinical resource is GREATLY needed in our community!!** The signatures below are from the Iowa Wesleyan College nursing students and professors in support of the Mt. Pleasant MHI remaining open, and furthermore, the prevention of closing any of the Iowa mental health resources. Thank you for your consideration and care of this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Susan Kongable
Lisa Kongable, MA, CNS, ARNP
Assistant Nursing Professor, Iowa Wesleyan College

quipped

Janna d'Arro

Elizabeth Teel
Kristy Jordan

[Signature]

Adam E. Cubrez
Jennifer N. Crowe

Michelle [unclear]

Patricia Notte
Aura Reitz
Jennifer Patterson
Tristan R. Chitt

Kate [unclear]
Fairlight Schwartz
Kangda Troy

Rene W. [unclear]
Holley [unclear]
Jenna Miller
[unclear]
Laura McDowell

Katie Jammer
Brittany Richardson
Melissa Pith

[unclear]
mandy Renken

Amanda [unclear]



Iowa Wesleyan College Nursing Division
Petition In Favor of Keeping the Mt. Pleasant MHI Open
October 22, 2009

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Lisa Kongable
Lisa Kongable, MA, CNS, ARNP
Assistant Nursing Professor, Iowa Wesleyan College

Lori K. Hick, RN MAT-IWC 4/09

Drumma Schaffer IWC SN

Linda McShane IWC SN

Amanda Azinger IWC SN

Amanda Baird IWC SN

Haigan Wear IWC SN

Kristen Dwyer IWC SN

Nesley Kollpeter IWC SN

Imyke Sengius
Jami Webster IWC SN
Jackie Dork IWC SN

Kate Pisula IWC SN
William B IWC SN
Jerry Bowser IWC SN

Jessie K Amy
Heather Gibbs
Maki IWC SN
Kade Canoll

Paige Ralston SN
Katy Storm, IWC, SN



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Lisa Kongable, MA, CNS, ARNP

Assistant Nursing Professor, Iowa Wesleyan College



Iowa Wesleyan COLLEGE

Krista Sneehey
Jade McWhiter

~~Sarah Padden~~
Denifer Conzatti

Denicia Baulow
ESTHER NSIKAN OKON.

~~Jamalia Hill~~

Annade Louise

Kelli McDowell
Cody Dine

Dana Tompkins
Sarah Gubelina

ma m'her

Aureynauer

Mary E. J. Reese

Andan Cific

Mary Ward

Erin Groz

Alisa Kogaliki

Michelle Lee

Carman Richers
Karynda Shafer
Beth Chasler