

# Foster home operators express concerns

By Mary Klonic  
staff writer

Adult foster care providers from around Michigan asked for more reimbursement from the state, listing rising expenses, the need for higher wages and possible competition from companies among their concerns.

Concerns and comments were aired at a two-hour public hearing Friday in Livonia City Hall conducted by state Sen. Robert Geake, R-Northville, chair-

man of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Social Services, and state Sen. Joe Conroy, D-Flint. Another public hearing on the subject is scheduled for 10 a.m. Friday in Kalamazoo.

"We continue to be grossly underfunded," said George Cushingberry, Jr. of the Michigan Residential Care Association. "We're appalled at the fact we're not able to make more progress. We are facing serious, serious trouble!"

Ben Howlett of Pinckney, who operates a five-resident home there, said he

figured that \$188 is half the amount needed to operate a home with six residents a day. This total includes land taxes, maintenance and transportation, among other costs, and comes to \$31.36 per resident, he said. The state pays only \$17.90 per resident, according to Howlett.

"If we did not have private-paying residents, I wouldn't be here today," he said.

A group home provider could be "wiped out" financially from a lawsuit

resulting from one patient attacking another, said Robert Werthmann, who operates a group home in New Baltimore.

The state should help defend that operator, and if it (the court decision) is against him, the state should pay it," he said.

Linda Clancy, who operates two adult foster care homes in Midland, expressed concern about a new parent company there that reportedly plans to provide services similar to those of-

ered by adult foster care homes. The company is owned by the hospital in Midland, according to Clancy. Clancy's referrals come from the Department of Social Services, doctors and word-of-mouth, she said.

"We're in imminent danger of being swallowed up or pushed aside," she said. "We can't compete with companies like that on the money we make."

Contract companies have money appropriated for repairs at the home, while independent providers can't, said Ruby Mitchell of Detroit.

Workers should be paid more so operators "can compete with welfare," said Esther Kish, a group home operator in Otisville in Genesee County.

Attention is needed today in rehabilitation and retraining for the brain injured, Saul Leff of Royal Oak said. He said this area wasn't even addressed until about 10 years ago.

Another concern had to do with possible over-regulation. Providers said licensing, fire and health regulations often overlap one another.

Willis Mae Yarbro of Detroit thought persons making complaints about a home should be required to give their names. Yarbro and others thought officials regulating the homes should visit them.

"You do not know what is happening in our homes," Arthur Middlebrooks of Detroit said.

## police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police and fire calls received during the past week.

### • PETITIONS PENDING

Two juveniles from Detroit, suspected of possessing a stolen car, were arrested in Farmington Hills late Feb. 13. Police intend to file petitions with the Oakland County Probate Court Juvenile Division charging the youths with receiving and concealing stolen property, said Sgt. Charles Nebus of the Farmington Hills Police Department.

Officers stopped the car as it headed west on Grand River near Nine Mile where it constantly switched lanes and slowed down, according to the police report.

After the car was stopped, one youth ran away, then was found under an evergreen in the yard of a nearby house, the report said.

The car, a 1979 Oldsmobile valued at \$2,000, was reported stolen out of Detroit Feb. 10, Nebus said.

### • THEFTS REPORTED

Several thefts were reported to local police agencies. Some of them follow:

A snowblower valued at \$300 was reported stolen from a garage on Vacri, Feb. 7-10.

A student's flute valued at \$594 was reported stolen from a storage cabinet in the music room of North Farmington High School, 32900 13 Mile, Feb. 0-11.

A car stereo, equalizer and tachometer valued at \$215 were reported stolen from a car parked in the east lot of Farmington High School on Shilawsee, Feb. 12.

A three-piece wool suit valued at \$238 was reported stolen from the Designer Depot, 32906 Middlebelt, Feb. 12.

A hunting knife, three guns and other items valued at \$1,150 were reported stolen from a house on David, Feb. 12.

Computer equipment valued at \$5,000 was reported stolen from Armstrong World Industries, 3080 Northwestern, Feb. 12.

A radar detector valued at \$300 was reported stolen from a car parked at Stark & Co., 30301 Northwestern, Feb. 13.

A VCR and jewelry valued at \$70 was reported stolen from a house in Quakerstown Feb. 13.


An AM/FM cassette radio and a radar detector valued at \$1,050 were reported stolen from a car parked at Denny's, 24250 Sinacola Court, Feb. 1. Cash plus payroll checks valued at \$597 were reported stolen from Ig-

Boy restaurant, 24301 Halsted, Feb. 14. Approximately 150-180 cartons of assorted cigarettes valued between \$1,500 to \$1,800 were reported stolen from the Farmington Party Store,

29450 10 Mile, Feb. 16. Soft drinks, candy and coins worth \$300 were reported stolen from a vending machine at Paychex Inc., 30777 Northwestern Highway, Feb. 17.

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