Analysis: County mental health system a failure

A scathing new report about Oak-land County's mental health esre-

and County's mental health care—"bystem apparently comes as no aurprise to those who use the system.

"They really don't have any good, well-run programs," said Bill Hayes of Birmingham, whuse son has been part of the county system for 15

An outside evaluation concluded the county mental health patients spent too much time in hospitals, too little in community-based pro-

grains.
It also concluded too many pa-tients are being "warehoused" in-

tients are being warehoused in-stead of treated.

"Everything that the study con-cluded — we've experienced," flayers said.

"There's a lack of crisis manage-

Area code from page 5A

Officials from these ares have stressed the need for extensive pul-

'We'll be talking plenty about it

The committee looked at whether glass were technically feasible, accommodated long-term growth, and referred casilly recognizable boundaries. O'Connor said only one planication of recognition.

Twenty-five other metropolitan regions — including New York.
Chicago, Los Angeles and San Krancisco — have added orea codes. The freent years. publicity.
Customers with questions about

the new area code may call toll-free 1-800-831-8989 for additional infor-

ment programs, a lack of housing and no help for those who are also substance abusers."

The situation is bad, not only for patients but for county taxpayers, aid Sue Catter of the Alliance for the Mentally III.

"It's been shown time and again that community-based services are the most effective services." Carter said. "At the same time, hospital services are by far more expensive."

The study found roughly 70 percent of the county mental health budget was being spent on hospitalis; 30 percent for community programs. It argued the figures should be reversed.

The Alliance sponsored the

The Alliance sponsored the \$15,000 atudy. It was compiled by Dr. Leonard Stein, a Wisconsinbased psychiatric care expert.

The Alliance, an advocacy group for patients and their relatives, is suing the county and state over the quality of mental health care in Oakland County.

County officials say the problem lies with inadequate state financ-

"Quite probably, we're going to be using this report to try to get more money from Lansing," said Richard Cooper, director of Oskland Community Mental Health Services, the

county mental health care agency.

But Carter said the money is there, it just isn't being spent prop-

"They're putting the money into things like an 800 hot line for smokers and substance abuse pro-grams," Carter said sold, "These are mental health issues, but they don't directly involve mental ill-ness."

cas."
County and state officials are currently negotiating a new "full management" agreement giving Oakland greater control over mental

health programs.

The Initial session, held Thursday, went "very well", Cooper said.

All sides agree greater county control could ease problems, but it could also mean greater county spending.

"The state is of the opinion that Oakland County is a wealthy coun-ty, but were already paying a lot for mental health care as it is," sold County Commissioner Marilyan Godling, R-Bloomfield Hills, a member community mental health services board.

The state is paying more than \$56 million for Oakalud Countyt mental health programs, the report

Though the state currently picks

up 90 percent of the tab, Gosling sold, the county will spend about \$7 million on mental health care this distance," Heyes sold, "We need mental health professionals and



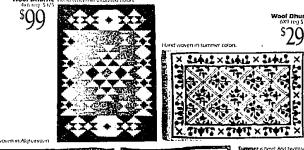
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