

Keep CVC open, lawmakers asked

By Suzie Rollins Singer
staff writer

A group of Oakland County residents Wednesday appealed to members of the state Legislature not to close Clinton Valley Center, a mental health unit at Pontiac.

The group — comprised of staff persons, health board members, residents-at-large and former patients — calls itself an Ad Hoc Committee to Save Clinton Valley Center.

Headed by Dorothy Eicker of Birmingham, they testified in Lansing before the House Appropriations Committee's mental health sub-committee.

"THE GOVERNOR has asked the legislature to find more money to keep the facility open, and we're going to try and convince them it's absolutely necessary," she said.

In June, the state Department of Mental Health targeted Clinton Valley to be closed in November if it could not secure \$550 million from the Legislature. The department said CVC's physical plant would have to be updated by modernizing some of the electrical, plumbing and heating equipment.

Plans called for 250 patients to be transferred to other facilities, includ-

ing Northville Regional Psychiatric Hospital.

However, there are no plans for relocating the remaining 240 patients.

"THERE IS no definite plan for these people if Clinton Valley were to be closed. It would cost more to send these people to other centers than to bring CVC up to code," Eicker said.

"There's no provision for the other half of the group. Foster home care has been a concern to many people, and there are too many negative reactions to rely on that form of help," she added.

Gov. William Milliken's original budget message asked for \$534 million for the Department of Mental Health. The Legislature, however, appropriated \$528 million. Recently, Milliken asked lawmakers to appropriate \$5.5 million they cut from his request.

Milliken's request would allow three centers — Clinton Valley, a Caro mental health center and a Kalamazoo center — to remain open.

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners as well as the Oakland County Community Health Services Board has gone on record opposing Clinton Valley's closing.

Group to fight utility fuel bill ballot plan

A new Michigan citizens coalition announced plans to fight a Nov. 2 ballot proposal which it says would cause higher unemployment rates as well as higher utility bills.

They are opposing a proposal by the Michigan Citizens Lobby which would eliminate automatic fuel adjustments on utility bills and would make all rate cases subject to "full-rate" hearings.

James Barrett, president of the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce, said the ballot proposal that stemmed from a petition drive by the Michigan

Citizens Lobby spells economic disaster for the state.

"We have the highest unemployment rate in the country already. We've braved our third year of economic recession. Now, just when we're beginning to recover, the initiative could deliver the knock-out blow," Barrett said.

The group, called Citizens for Michigan Jobs and Energy, is supporting instead a legislative proposal that is awaiting court certification to get on the ballot — a proposal Barrett called "sensible and rational."

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