



Exchange

"Protecting the Rights of Persons With Disabilities"

Services, Resources Among Chief Concerns of TBI Survivors

Disability Rights Michigan (DRM) recently collected survey data from 150 individuals to help identify the challenges experienced by people living with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) in Michigan. The survey included 12 questions regarding TBI survivors' demographics, perceived needs, satisfaction regarding the services they received/are receiving as well as the barriers they are facing.

Key Findings

- **40 – 60 years old:**
The majority age of the TBI survivors represented in the survey
- **46%** of survivors identified auto insurance as their method of TBI aid
- **60%** go to the Brain Injury Association of Michigan for TBI resources and assistance
- **51%** said they have NOT been able to access all the services they need
- **46%** of survivors stated their employment status was due to their inability to perform their previous job due to their TBI
- **51%** are living with family or friends



The purpose of this survey was to identify needs within the TBI survivor community and what barriers were preventing access to resources. The responses demonstrated the TBI survivor community is looking for additional services, but 30% of survivors stated the service they require is not covered. Many respondents also indicated they are not aware of the resources available to them in Michigan.

As those in the TBI survivor community continue to age, it is important for them to receive better education and long-term programs and services. DRM is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with TBI. Our agency ensures that they and their families have access to information and referral, self-advocacy support and advice, and legal representation in select cases.

If you, or someone you know, has suffered a traumatic brain injury and is looking for additional information, please contact Disability Rights Michigan. Our advocates are available Monday – Friday (9am – 1pm / 2pm – 4pm).

Suit Filed Against MDOC Healthcare Contractor

Inmate Dies from Thorazine Overdose



DRM and Lipton Law (Lipton) have filed a suit in U.S. District Court against Corizon Correctional Healthcare, a private contractor with the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). According to the lawsuit, in 2018 Ashley Harris, a thirty-year-old inmate at the Women's Huron Valley

Correctional Facility, died after receiving an acute overdose of the antipsychotic drug Thorazine.

When she died, Ms. Harris was near the end of her six-year prison sentence. Despite an extensive mental health history, Ms. Harris was sentenced through the Michigan criminal court system instead of being diverted through the Michigan mental health court. The mental health court is a system that utilizes a problem-solving model to address the needs of individuals with severe mental illness.

Orders outlined in her Mental Health Management Plan indicated that Ms. Harris was to be assigned a Prisoner Observation Aide and remain under direct and continuous observation status in the prison's acute mental health unit.

Because Ms. Harris was a person with a disability, and due to her death occurring in an acute mental health unit with seemingly no explanation or disclosure, DRM employed its Federally mandated access authority to investigate her death.

"Our prison system is not where we should house the most severely mentally ill people in Michigan," said Kyle Williams, Litigation Director for DRM. "We need to reassess how and where we treat women with severe mental illness in this State."

The suit names Corizon Health and staff working in the prison who prescribed and administered the toxic doses of medication, and multiple currently yet-to-be-identified parties who disregarded the pleas for help from Ashley Harris and Prison Observation Aides in the days leading to her death.

DRM Receives NDRN Advocacy Award

We are pleased to announce our agency has been awarded the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) Advocacy Award for our outstanding work conducting representative payee reviews.

Our Representative Payee team worked hard to overcome many obstacles over the past year. They have made a positive impact on the people and mission we all serve. We are honored to accept this award.

Request an Assistive Technology (AT) Demo

Assistive Technology (AT) is any tool, device, software, or app that helps people with disabilities, including older adults, do what they want to do. Such as: creating art, living in your own home, cooking and more!

Interested in learning about AT that may be helpful to you? The Michigan Assistive Technology Program (MATP) can help.

1. Contact MATP to request an AT demo! Their services are free.
2. Schedule a demonstration with a member of their team.
3. Devices will be dropped off right to your door for you to try.
4. Join MATP over a phone or video call to learn more about the devices.

Contact MATP today.

Phone: 1-800-578-0280, Michigan Relay: 711

Email: AT@MyMDRC.org

Request an AT demonstration by going to:

www.MyMDRC.org

MDHHS Announces Pilot Crisis Helpline

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is announcing the launch of the Michigan Crisis and Access Line (MiCAL), with the rollout beginning in Oakland County and the Upper Peninsula.

Michiganders in Oakland County and the Upper Peninsula will be able to call, text or chat with MiCAL for free behavioral health crisis triage, support, resource information and referral to local services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



“While the launch of this crisis helpline is starting in Oakland County and the UP, we look forward to its expansion to ensure that all Michiganders have access to the behavioral health care they deserve at no cost, no matter where they are,” said Governor Gretchen Whitmer. “We’ve gone through a challenging year, and I am grateful to MDHHS for working to protect Michiganders from COVID-19 and giving them the behavioral health support they need to thrive.”

MiCAL can be reached via phone or text at 844-44-MICAL (844-446-4225). Chat is accessed through Michigan.gov/MiCAL.

DRM Online Forms

Did you know you can contact DRM through our online forms any time? Our staff will review your request on the next regularly scheduled work day and will personally contact you as quickly as possible.

Forms:

- [Request Help](#)
- [General Questions](#)
- [Request a Publication](#)
- [Request a Training/Outreach](#)

www.drmich.org/contact/

Direct Care Workers Are Essential

Direct Care Workers are benefiting from the temporary wage increase introduced by the Governor and Legislature. DRM is working to extend this increase and keep these essential workers on the job.

A recent survey by the Institute on Community Integration and the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals showcases the impact of the pandemic on direct care workers across the country. “[Direct care workers] provide an array of critical supports making it possible for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to live, work, and thrive in their communities. The pandemic has affected this work in many ways. This survey, completed by 1,139 direct care workers from Michigan, gathered information about the experiences of direct care workers intended to inform efforts to prepare for future waves of the pandemic.”

Survey Results

97% of direct care workers have been classified as essential during the pandemic

74% feel their work is appreciated by their organization

53% felt the locations in which they work have been adequately staffed

87% of direct care workers surveyed were female

49% of the direct care workers surveyed worked in family/individual homes



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<http://www.drmich.org>

Voice/TTY/Language and accommodations available. Available in alternative formats upon request.

Michelle Roberts
Executive Director

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