



February 26, 2016

The Honorable Bruce Rauner
207 Statehouse
Springfield, IL 62706

Re: The effect of the budget stalemate on persons in state mental hospitals

Dear Governor Rauner:

Many of harms caused by the budget stalemate are well known to you, to the Illinois legislature and to the public. However, there are serious harms being inflicted on persons in state mental hospitals which are hidden from view. Just six miles from the State Capitol Building is the McFarland Mental Health Center, one of the seven remaining mental hospitals operated by the Illinois Department of Human Services. More than one hundred people with serious mental illnesses are housed in this facility. Unfortunately, the conditions in this facility are deteriorating rapidly due to the budget impasse. There are shortages of food and toiletries and even the heating has been reduced. The patients are now making a desperate plea to the public for help, including requests for sweaters due to the cold.

I have enclosed a letter from one of the patients at McFarland documenting the conditions. It is not an exaggeration to say that Illinois psychiatric hospitals are becoming like those in a third world country. Have we forgotten the legacy of Dorothea Dix and Jane Addams (one of the founders of Mental Health America of Illinois) and their crusade to end snake pits in Illinois? The 21st Century should not be like the 19th Century. That is not progress.

MHAI urges you to meet with the legislative leaders and end this stalemate.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Heyrman, Chairperson
Public Policy Committee
Writer's direct line: 773-753-4440

cc: Senate President John Cullerton
Senate Republican Leader Christine Radogno
Speaker of the House of Representatives Michael J. Madigan
House Republican Leader Jim Durkin

We Need Your Help!!!

To Whom This May Concern:

My name is Jenie Inman, and I am a patient in a DHS state-funded facility. As I'm sure you are aware, our state is in a *severe* crisis. State-funded organizations are *not* receiving government funding to meet the needs of the poor and/or institutionalized. Warming centers, homeless shelters, group homes, food banks, assisted living complexes, and domestic violence shelters have been forced to close their doors. Food stamps and Medicaid have been cut, and the disabled are about ready to lose their state-funded disability checks. Programs that assisted with paying electric bills and helping with rent have been forced out of business. People are being thrown out on the street in the freezing cold with nowhere else to go, and no one else to go to for help.

DHS is also suffering. People with government contracts, paid to come in and provide basic care to patients, have lost their contracts due to a lack of funding. We have no access to vision or dental care, and haircuts are few and very far between. There is only one psychologist for roughly 125 patients, and almost no individual counseling is available to aid in patient recovery. There are no programs to help with domestic violence, abuse, or grief. There is no money, there is no library, and patients are now without even the most basic hygiene necessities. We used to have a point system that allowed us to earn points for attending groups, which could later be used to "purchase" needed items from the "store" here at McFarland Mental Health Center. The store closed weeks ago because there are no items, and there is no funding. Patients don't even have shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, deodorant or other basic needs.

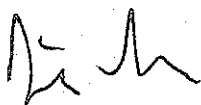
We are experiencing food shortages, and the buildings are freezing cold because there is a lack of funding for adequate heat. Several patients cannot even read or write. More than a few do not even have teeth, eyeglasses, or hearing aids. Many don't have coats, shoes, or warm clothing. We lost all funding to be able to send out any letters to family, and we can make only one, ten minute call per week unless we have a personal calling card or money for the pay phone. Most do not. Nor do they have access to, or money for, postage stamps or envelopes. Patients have no way to keep in contact with their loved ones because there is no funding, and patients are poor and unemployed while within this facility. Some will spend the rest of their lives here without even basic needs getting met.

It is the poor and the confined who are suffering most. The government budget crisis is *killing* the already destitute. Governor Rauner has *no* intention of backing down, and neither do the others. We are at a stand-off; with people in power not budging. Yet, it's the people already in desperate need who are suffering the most. Not the government. On behalf of all DHS patients, and every poor person in Illinois, I am pleading for your assistance.

Enclosed is a list of McFarland's particular needs. I urge you to reach out to discover what the needs are of *other* facilities also being affected by this crisis. I implore you to stand together in a fight against our state government, to petition our Governor to put an end to this budget crisis and release the funding needed for the poor to survive. For some, time is quickly running out as they freeze and starve to death out on the streets. Please help by providing not only donations or pro bono services, but by enticing our government into action by getting others involved in becoming spokespeople for the destitute; who cannot speak for themselves. Please take the time to look over the list provided and see what, if anything, you are able and willing to do to help us. On behalf of all patients here at McFarland, and the destitute people of Illinois, I thank you in advance for your charitable contributions and your support in ending this crisis. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jenie Inman



McFarland, Jefferson Hall

901 Southwind Drive

Springfield, IL 62703

217-786-6808

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Items Needed

Hygiene Items

- Tissues
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant for men and women
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Body wash
- Lotion
- Sanitary pads
- Tampons
- Depends
- Alcohol-free mouthwash
- Alcohol-free hand sanitizer
- Polident
- Poligrip
- Efferdent Tablets
- Denture cases
- Contact solution
- Contact cases
- Toothpaste for sensitive teeth with baking soda and peroxide
- Hand towels
- Wash cloths
- Bath towels

Clothing (men and women)

- Winter boots
- Tennis shoes
- Dress shoes
- Jeans

- Dress slacks
- Dress shirts/blouses
- Sweaters/sweatshirts
- Thermal underwear
- Winter hats
- Winter gloves
- Winter coats
- Socks
- Underwear
- Bras

Food/Drinks/Snacks/Kitchen

- Barbeque sauce packets
- Hot sauce packets
- Mayonnaise packets
- Ketchup packets
- Mustard packets
- Relish packets
- Tartar sauce packets
- Taco sauce packets
- White sugar packets
- Brown sugar packets
- Salt packets
- Pepper packets
- Artificial sweetener packets
- Peanut Butter packets
- Jelly packets
- 16 oz. Styrofoam cups
- Styrofoam bowls
- Plastic forks
- Plastic spoons
- Juice boxes
- Caffeine-free tea

- Caffeine-free coffee
- Kool-Aid
- Hot chocolate packets
- Non-perishable snacks (individual boxes of cereal, granola bars, Chex Mix, graham crackers, etc)
- Pretzels
- Chips
- Fruit Snacks
- Boxes of raisins
- Pop Tarts
- Other healthy, non-perishable, individually packaged snacks

Household/Medical

- Pillows
- Eye glasses
- Reading glasses
- Dentures

Art Supplies/Mail Supplies/Communication

- Phone cards
- Envelopes (long)
- Shipping envelopes (brown)
- Stamps
- Lined writing paper
- Computer paper
- Construction paper
- Crayons
- Markers
- Flex pens
- Composition books
- Pocket folders
- Paper expanding files
- Post-It notes
- Journals

Entertainment

- DVD's
- Music CD's
- Wireless radio headsets
- AA Batteries
- AAA Batteries
- Board games
- Playing cards

Reading/Education Materials

- Newspaper subscriptions
- Self-help books
- Legal books
- Motivational books
- Spiritual books
- Recovery books
- Books about mental illness
- Books about common medical conditions
- Health/Nutrition/Fitness books
- Weight loss/ weight management books
- Relaxation technique guides
- Seminars and motivational speakers on DVD
- Workshops on DVD
- Magazines
- College textbooks
- Career Exam Prep Guides
- ACT/SAT/GED study guides
- Scholarship books
- Finance books
- Books about computers
- Hooked on Phoenix-type aids to teach the illiterate to read and write
- Learning Foreign Language CD's
- Fitness DVD's

- Resume writing guides
- Dictionaries
- English/Grammar books
- Workbooks for self-help and education
- Books on finding out what types of jobs one would excel at (ex. "Do What You Are")
- Psychology books
- DSM-V
- PDR

Volunteer Services Needed

- Dental work
- Eye exams
- Chiropractic work
- Pro bono defense attorneys to help those with poor public defenders
- Hair cuts