

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing in strong support of H8417, which would provide temporary funding to help keep Hillsgrove House open during its current Medicaid funding crisis.

Hillsgrove House is the only Clubhouse in Rhode Island and provides essential services, community, and support for people living with mental health conditions. Clubhouses are a proven model that help people build relationships, return to work and school, reduce isolation, and remain connected to their communities.

I am especially concerned that a technical Medicaid issue could put Rhode Island's only Clubhouse at risk of closure. The people who rely on Hillsgrove House should not lose access to this critical resource while the funding issue is being resolved.

In Massachusetts, we recall when our budget was in question back in October of 2009. The clubhouse communities at the time rallied and advocated stating "Clubhouses are our safety net" in retaliation to their programs potential closure. Current Hillsgrove director Mark Maragnano was a part of these advocacy efforts.

Hillsgrove House is led by Mark, a respected longtime Clubhouse leader who previously served as Director of Potter Place in Waltham, Massachusetts. His leadership and the Hillsgrove House community deserve support during this urgent time. Mark recently presented at a Transitional Employment Symposium in Worcester in support of the Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition.

According to Beckers Hospital Review, in Massachusetts, psychiatric hospitalization costs as much as \$2,839 per person per day; and according to visual capitalist, a state prison costs about \$842 per person per day. It costs the commonwealth about \$78 a day to participate in clubhouses. Membership is offered at no cost to members, and clubhouse involvement and support is available across members' lifetime. Clubhouses are efficient and cheap for states to operate and save not only money but lives.

Being the only clubhouse in Rhode Island makes Hillsgrove House an asset for the state.

The Elliot House of Needham, Massachusetts respectfully urges the Committee to support H8417 and provide the temporary funding needed to keep Hillsgrove House open.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Members and Staff of Elliot House  
Riverside Community Care

John Cook  
Mary Powell  
Sam P. L.  
- Staff  
Jessica Feldman  
Rita Salvucci  
Anna Louie  
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John Mondak, Elliot Starr  
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Stephen Chaffee, Director  
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Dan Dennis member  
Joanna L. Mann