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Chairman Abney  
House Finance Committee

### **Testimony in support of H8417**

May 4, 2026

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,  
I am writing in support of H8417 for the purpose of endorsing an appropriation of \$500,000 in support of Hillsgrove Clubhouse operated by Thrive Behavioral Health. This evidence-based program recognized by SAMHSA provides an effective psychosocial rehabilitation resource for persons with severe and persistent mental illness to remain active and engaged members of the community. The primary attributes of the program include:

- Provides a tangible means of reducing isolation and loneliness by participating with a community of people with shared or similar experiences.
- Teaches participants vocational skills that can be transferred to employment opportunities.
- Facilitates opportunities for participants to work together in planning and implementing projects.
- Creates opportunities for participants to complete their GED and access other post-secondary training and/or education.
- Employs a person-centered, recovery-oriented approach which places participants at the center of planning their rehabilitation.
- The program works with its participants to plan an array of social activities that places them in community settings, thereby reducing isolation and stigma.

I would urge the Finance Committee to view Hillsgrove not only from the perspective of “good programming” but also as a cost-effective means of reducing over utilization of Hospital Emergency Departments and inpatient care. In my opinion, the State needs these types of psychosocial rehabilitation models as an alternative to typical medically oriented systems that are both costly and lack long-term support such as occurring at Hillsgrove. I would encourage the committee to review the link below for further information.

[\(https://www.hillsgroveclubhouseri.org/\)](https://www.hillsgroveclubhouseri.org/)

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Benedict F. Lessing, Jr.", is written over a blue circular stamp.

Benedict F. Lessing, Jr. MSW  
President/CEO