

December 6, 2022

Grand Rapids City Commission
300 Monroe Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

RE: Support for Action to Improve Health Outcomes

Dear Mayor and Commissioners:

We appreciate local government's leadership on the issue of supporting unhoused individuals. The City of Grand Rapids has demonstrated its concern by providing shelter, increasing outreach, offering mental health support, and providing storage capacity for personal belongings. Kent County has also demonstrated its concern through its recent action to invest in new mental health crisis services and outreach.

Despite these important steps, gaps remain in our community's effort to compassionately support those in critical need of services. No one should have to sleep on a sidewalk, in a doorway or in any other unprotected public space. We can be better at supporting the needs and dignity of individuals in these circumstances, and your actions can help encourage use of available resources and further highlight where additional investments are required.

Combined with other efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing, provide mental health support, and improve outcomes amongst service providers, new City of Grand Rapids ordinances should be considered to encourage greater use of available resources while also encouraging a safe and secure environment for unhoused people and the larger community.

In true Grand Rapids fashion, we can be the best practice leaders for other communities. We have the capacity, commitment, compassion, and community support to move forward, and we urge you to continue taking action to address this important concern.

Sincerely,

Darryl Elmouchi, MD
President
Corewell Health West

Matt Biersack, MD
President
Trinity Health Saint Mary's

Peter Hahn, MD
President & CEO
University of Michigan
Health-West

Tasha Blackmon
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Dennis Van Kampen
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Mel Trotter Ministries

Thelma Ensink
Executive Director
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