

I am a former psychiatric patient and current social worker, manager at a designated agency, and member of DMH's Adult Standing Committee.

I am writing to let you know that I (and numerous others who I have spoken with) oppose the Middlesex Therapeutic Residential Replacement and would appreciate an opportunity to speak to the Committee about why this project would be a misuse of funds, cause harm to psychiatric patients, and fail to solve the problems that are so significant in our mental health system of care.

In short:

- Having a Therapeutic Community Residence (TCR) that is **locked** and uses **restraint, seclusion and involuntary medication** is an **unprecedented** expansion of coercive practices
- The proposed facility is **functionally a hospital** in its design, practices, staffing, and cost. Calling this facility a residential program is a misnomer and inappropriate. The proposed facility should be thought of as a **second state hospital** rather than as a residential. When I asked DMH at a stakeholder meeting how the "secure residential" was different than a hospital their only response was "in its intention."
- DMH, DAs, advocates, and people receiving services all agree that there is a **desperate and chronic need** for increased funding for community resources and hospital alternatives. The significant amount of money that would be required to build and operate this **unnecessary** facility would be better spent on [peer respites](#), community supports, and ending homelessness.

I'm available to speak one-on-one about this issue or to the House Corrections and Institutions Committee as a whole. Please feel free to call, text, or email. Thank you for your consideration!

Malaika Puffer