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# Protestors Voice Concerns Over Future Of State Mental Health Care At Community Meeting

Posted on: 6:18 pm, March 23, 2012, by [David Kumbroch \(http://whnt.com/author/whntdavidkumbroch/\)](http://whnt.com/author/whntdavidkumbroch/)

Protesters lobbied outside the Huntsville Public Library today ahead of a community meeting on the state's shifting role in taking care of the mentally ill.

Protester Cletus Welti explains, "What brings me out here today is to make sure we keep funding for mental health services in Alabama. The governor has said there is going to be proration and are looking at cutting mental health services, and we desperately need them here in Huntsville."

Inside the library, concerned community members meet about the future of the system.

State officials say they'll transition away from state level hospitals and care, putting that burden on the community.

Everyone seems concerned about the shift, from law enforcement to medical professionals.

National Alliance on Mental Illness Secretary Pippa Abston says, "There are plans to transition current services at original hospitals to the community level, but there is no good plan for what will take place."

The state says they want to take their time to hear all concerns.

Alabama Department of Mental Health's Tammy Peacock says, "We do not have a deadline at this point. We've removed any hard deadlines. I know that was causing a lot of concerns for our stakeholders and our consumers and for us as well."

But some see the lack of timeline as a lack of plan.

Abston says, "I'm concerned that the Department of Mental Health was not able to answer my question about how much money they need and how much time they need to prepare the communities. If they knew, there weren't telling us. They could not answer that."

The community debated fiercely, and made lengthy lists of their expectations.

If they get their way, it won't be the last time they have their voices heard on the issue.

Abston hosts a [Facebook group \(http://www.facebook.com/groups/245531232206343/?\\_ad=23\)](http://www.facebook.com/groups/245531232206343/?_ad=23) to help people get involved in the debate.

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