

**GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Many state and county offices have received calls regarding the transfer of COVID-19 patients to the Medilodge facility in Grand Traverse County. Medilodge, a private organization that operates long-term care facilities throughout the state, has agreed to accept COVID-19 patients.

According to the statement released by Medilodge on April 10, 2020, the facility will be preparing to take patients from *local* hospitals. There have been no transfers to date.

My office has received calls asking that we prohibit transfers. The Governor's Executive Order 2020-42, however, does allow the transferring of patients from one facility to another. Consequently, neither my office nor the health department have the authority to prohibit such transfers. Additionally, it is important, especially during these unprecedented times, that we continue to work regionally to provide the best possible outcomes for people in need.

As Grand Traverse County Health Officer, Wendy Hirschenberger, explains, "Mutual aid is a long standing component of a pandemic response in public health at the regional level. It provides a safety net for our own hospitals when they exceed capacity. We want to work with facilities within our county to be prepared if we reach that need locally, including ensuring a long term care facility has a plan specific to COVID-19 care, enough staff, supplies and personal protective equipment and an environmental way to protect existing residents in their care. We understand that this pandemic is challenging all sectors in ways that may not have been expected, so we want to have a solid plan in place in order to best protect all our citizens."

Please know that there are many community leaders who share concerns about bringing COVID-19 patients from more widespread areas to our local long term care facilities. We will continue to speak with those at the state level who have the authority to make decisions regarding the safest distribution of COVID-19 patients in long term care facilities. We will also provide updates as quickly as we are able.