STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MARLON I. BROWN, DPA
DIRECTOR

July 27, 2026

Nichole VanNiman
Beacon Specialized Living Services, Inc.
Suite 110
890 N. 10th St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

RE: License #: AS230404895
Investigation #: 2026A0007032
Beacon Home at Arlene

Dear Nichole VanNiman:

Attached is the Special Investigation Report for the above referenced facility. Due to the violations identified in the report, a written corrective action plan is required. The corrective action plan is due 15 days from the date of this letter and must include the following:

- How compliance with each rule will be achieved.
- Who is directly responsible for implementing the corrective action for each violation.
- Specific time frames for each violation as to when the correction will be completed or implemented.
- How continuing compliance will be maintained once compliance is achieved.
- The signature of the responsible party and a date.

If you desire technical assistance in addressing these issues, please feel free to contact me. In any event, the corrective action plan is due within 15 days. Failure to submit an acceptable corrective action plan will result in disciplinary action.

Please review the enclosed documentation for accuracy and contact me with any questions. In the event that I am not available and you need to speak to someone immediately, please contact the local office at (517) 335-5985.

Sincerely,

Mahtina Rubritius

Mahtina Rubritius, Licensing Consultant
Bureau of Community and Health Systems
611 W. Ottawa
P.O. Box 30664
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 262-8604

Enclosure

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
BUREAU OF COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SYSTEMS
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

License #:	AS230404895
Investigation #:	2026A0007032
Complaint Receipt Date:	06/04/2026
Investigation Initiation Date:	06/05/2026
Report Due Date:	08/03/2026
Licensee Name:	Beacon Specialized Living Services, Inc.
Licensee Address:	Suite 110 890 N. 10th St. Kalamazoo, MI 49009
Licensee Telephone #:	(269) 427-8400
Administrator:	Nichole VanNiman
Licensee Designee:	Nichole VanNiman
Name of Facility:	Beacon Home at Arlene
Facility Address:	4219 Arlene Drive Lansing, MI 48917
Facility Telephone #:	(517) 253-7112
Original Issuance Date:	10/02/2020
License Status:	REGULAR
Effective Date:	03/29/2025
Expiration Date:	03/28/2027
Capacity:	6
Program Type:	DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED MENTALLY ILL

II. ALLEGATION(S)

	Violation Established?
Concerns that Resident A has been financially exploited	Yes

III. METHODOLOGY

06/04/2026	Special Investigation Intake - 2026A0007032
06/05/2026	Special Investigation Initiated – Telephone - Interview with APS Worker.
06/11/2026	Inspection Completed On-site - Unannounced - Face to face contact with Natalee Christian, DCW, Sharisse Farr, DCW, Resident A, and other visitors in the home.
07/02/2026	Contact - Telephone call received from Emily Presendieu, APS. Discussion.
07/06/2026	Contact - Telephone call received message from Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff’s Office.
07/07/2026	Contact - Telephone call made to Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff’s Office. Discussion.
07/07/2026	Contact - Document Received - Email from Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff’s Office. Case Numbers provided: 2026-0002270.
07/07/2026	Contact - Document Sent - Email to Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff’s Office. Contact information for Guardian A1 provided.
07/08/2026	Contact - Document Sent - Email to Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff’s Office.
07/08/2026	Contact - Document Sent- Email to and from Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff’s Office. Regarding rescheduling appointment on 7/13/26.
07/08/2026	Contact - Document Received- Email from Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff’s Office. Regarding scheduling the upcoming interview.
07/14/2026	Contact - Telephone call made to Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff’s Office. Discussion. Possible date to interview Michele Hitsman 7/21/26.

07/15/2026	Contact - Document Received- Email from Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff's Office.
07/20/2026	Contact - Document Sent- Emai to Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff's Office. Regarding scheduling of interview.
07/21/2026	Contact - Document Received- Email from Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff's Office. She has not heard from Michele Hitsman.
07/22/2026	Contact - Document Sent- Email to Emily Presendieu, APS. Status update requested.
07/22/2026	Contact - Document Sent- Email to Brooke Landis, Program Director- Eastern Region.
07/22/2026	Contact - Document Sent- Email to Guardian A1 to schedule an interview.
07/22/2026	Contact - Telephone call made to Brooke Landis, Program Director- Eastern Region. Interview.
07/22/2026	Contact - Telephone call made to Guardian A1. Interview.
07/22/2026	Contact - Document Received- Email from Emily Presendieu, APS. Her investigation is ongoing as Michele Hitsman has not been interviewed.
07/22/2026	Contact - Document Sent- Email to Emily Presendieu, APS. Status update provided.
07/23/2026	Contact - Telephone call made to Brooke Landis, Program Director- Eastern Region. Follow up.
07/23/2026	Contact - Telephone call made to Guardian A1- Update regarding the charge on 6/22/26.
07/27/2026	Exit Conference – Conducted with Nichole VanNiman, Licensee Designee.
07/27/2026	Contact - Telephone call made to Nichole VanNiman, Licensee Designee. Follow-up.

ALLEGATION: Concerns that Resident A has been financially exploited.

INVESTIGATION:
As a part of this investigation, I reviewed the written complaint and the following additional information was noted: Resident A has a bank card, Bank Card #1, where $45.00 is deposited monthly. Bank Card #1 cannot be located, and the home manager, Michele Hitsman, is the only person who had access to the card. There have been cash withdrawals and other purchases made with the card. Prior to the Bank Card #1, Resident A was provided cash and the home held on to the cash. There are documents that Resident A deposited cash of $45.00 and then withdrew the same exact amount the same day. Michele Hitsman signed this document each time. Due to Resident A's cognitive functioning, he does not understand the concept of money.

Based upon a previous investigation regarding Resident A, it was noted during SIR#2026A0007020 that Resident A has been diagnosed with Autism and Cognitive Impairment. Resident A is non-verbal and he has limited communication skills. Resident A depends on others to advocate for him.

On June 5, 2026, I spoke with Emily Presendieu, APS, who also has a pending investigation. She informed me that Melissa Gekler from Network 180 is also aware of the allegations. A referral was previously made to law enforcement, and she (Emily Presendieu) recently followed up regarding this matter. She has also collected some financial documents. Emily Presendieu reviewed the documents and noted that purchases were made at stores such as Dollar Tree, Walmart, and there were withdrawals from the ATM. These purchases were in Grand Ledge. It was noted that Michele Hitsman had already been suspended (due to another investigation), and the card was used on 5/8/26 at Meijer and 5/10/26, at the Dollar Tree in Grand Ledge. According to Emily Presendieu, each month, Resident A receives $45.00. and there is a monthly fee of $6.00; therefore, there is $39.00 available each month after the fees. The guardian sent the money to Beacon Central office, and the money is loaded on to Bank Card #1. It appears that the money was deposited and withdrawn on the same day. According to Emily Presendieu, Brooke Landis, Program Director- Eastern Region, also checked into the matter, including speaking with other staff. When Brooke Landis asked how he purchased items, they (staff) said with the company card, which is different from Bank Card #1. Michele Hitsman was the only individual who had access to Bank Card #1. Brooke Landis was notified about Bank Card #1 on or about May 13, 2026, and she searched the staff office, looking for Bank Card #1, but could not find it. Bank Card #1 was created by staff in Beacon's Central Office; therefore, they can also see the transactions. She will keep me updated regarding the status of the investigation. Emily Presendieu informed me that she has not interviewed Michele Hitman yet and Melissa Gekler, Network 180, has not heard back from her either.

On June 11, 2026, I conducted an unannounced on-site investigation and made face to face contact with Natalee Christian, direct care worker (DCW), Sharisse Farr, DCW, Resident A, and other visitors in the home. There were no other residents in the facility at the time of the investigation. I reviewed Resident A's file while I was at the facility. I also spoke to Shareese Farr, DCW, who informed me that she did not have a lot of information, but that when the residents went on outings, Michele Hitsman handled all the cards. In addition, that Resident A's card was always with Michele Hitsman. Michele Hitsman would only give staff the card if they went to the hospital or a place where they needed to pay for parking. Shereese Farr stated that Brooke Landis asked her about Bank Card #1, and she didn't know he had that card. She informed me that Michele Hitsman had access to all the cards etc., and she did not know what was going on. Shereese Farr did recall seeing Michele Hitsman get out of her personal vehicle with the purple pouch (where the cards were kept), but she did not know what she was doing. Shereese Farr reported that she did not know if the other residents had cards (like Bank Card #1).

I spoke with Natalee Christian, DCW who informed me there were two cards that staff used for purchases. The primary card was used for staff to purchase household items and groceries. The second card was for community outings or anything else the residents wanted or needed.

On July 2, 2026, I spoke with Emily Presendieu, APS. She followed up regarding the investigation with law enforcement, and the investigations have been assigned to Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff's Office.

On July 7, 2026, I spoke with Detective Heather Stefan, Eaton County Sheriff's Office. We discussed the investigation. She agreed to send over the report numbers, and we agreed to discuss the cases more on July 13, 2026.

On July 14, 2026, I spoke with Detective Heather Stefan. We discussed the investigation. Regarding the fraud investigation, she only has a complaint regarding Resident A. We also discussed the possible interview date.

On July 15, 2026, Detective Heather Stefan informed Emily Presendieu, APS, and I, that she spoke with Guardian A1. Guardian A1 said that Michele Hitsman opened the Bank Card #1 account, and it was opened before Resident A was at the facility. The family had no idea about the account. Detective Heather Stefan questioned if other residents had accounts too. Emily Presendieu, APS informed us that she had asked about this and was told that Resident A was the only resident with the Bank Card #1. Note: I also was not aware of any other residents having this type of bank card/account.

On July 22, 2026, I interviewed Brooke Landis, Program Director-Eastern Region. She informed me that while she was at the facility (specific date unknown), she was informed of some things that were occurring when Michele Hitsman was the home manager. Regarding resident funds, she was informed that the staff used the corporation business card to purchase personal care items for the residents or when taking the residents on outings. Staff also informed her that Michele Hitsman usually took Resident A on his outings while the other residents were in school. Brooke Landis completed some additional inquiries and emailed the internal billing department to inquire about personal funds and which residents received them. She was informed that Resident A was the only resident that received personal funds and the money was on Bank Card #1. She also reached out to the guardians for the other residents in the facility and was able to confirm that they (the guardians) provided what was needed and these residents did not have ATM cards. Brooke Landis informed me that Michele Hitsman was suspended in April (due to another special investigation). Michele Hitsman had the petty cash, in the amount of $318, the card, and they don't know what else, when she was suspended. According to Brooke Landis, Beacon officials have reached out to Michele Hitsman several times to meet up with her, return her belongings, and get the cash and card from her, without success. Brooke Landis stated that she reviewed the facility file and Resident Funds Part II for Resident A, nothing was logged since 2023, and there were no receipts. She was not sure why the money was then transferred to Bank Card #1. She requested that Beacon CO cancel the card and order a new one. The new card did not arrive. She later followed up and discovered that the card was still active, so she requested the statements for Bank Card #1 be sent to her. She informed me that APS also investigated the matter and was provided with the Resident Funds Part II and the statements for Bank Card #1. She stated that the card was used in May (Grand Ledge Area), after Michele Hitsman had already been suspended. To her knowledge, Michele Hitsman was the only person with access to the card. She also confirmed that Resident A would need assistance with utilizing an ATM card.

On July 22, 2026, I interviewed Guardian A1, who informed me that she had also been in contact with Detective Heather Stefan regarding this investigation. Regarding the Bank Card #1, Guardian A1 stated that the account for a vulnerable individual is in Michele Hitsman's name that also includes Resident A's name. Guardian A1 stated there is a log in for the account holder and the resident; however, she is unable to make any changes when logged into Resident A's account, but she was able to make the account inactive. She stated that a new card was active in June, but she was not sure by whom. She stated that there were charges on the account in May and June 2026, after Michele Hitsman was suspended, and that she would forward the bank statements. She stated that her father, Relative A1, is the Payee for Resident A and he sends the money (cost of care) to Beacon, along with $45.00 (personal funds). Michele Hitsman then would transfer the $45.00 to the Bank Card #1. Guardian A1 stated that $40.00 would be withdrawn, leaving some money, as there is a $6.00 monthly fee. Guardian A1 stated that she added up everything and the money unaccounted for or missing totaled around $1,300.00. She also stated that she experienced difficulties communicating with Beacon staff as she contacted the billing office and the main office and was unable to speak to anyone. She left messages but did not receive a call back or the voicemails were full. She stated that she also sent a letter to Nichole VanNiman with her concerns.

As a part of this investigation, I reviewed the transactions documented on the *Resident Funds Part II* form for 2023. Between January 2023 and September 2023 there were nine deposits (that included Michele Hitsman's and Resident A's signatures) and withdrawals. It was noted that the money was deposited and the same amount was withdrawn. Most of the withdrawals included a note "client withdraw or withdraw." There were no other descriptions. I also reviewed the transactions logs for Bank Card #1 from December 2023 to June 23, 2026. There were multiple transactions on the account. Each month, $45.00 was transferred to the account. The transactions also included purchases at stores and gas stations. There were multiple balance inquiries and ATM withdrawals. Based upon the transaction logs, the ATM withdrawals began in June of 2024. There were a total of 23 ATM withdrawals and all but one was for the amount of $40.00. The ATM withdrawal on May 12, 2025, was for $60.00. It was also noted that on May 13, 2026, the balance was transferred to the replacement card and there was a replacement card fee. On June 10, 2026, an additional $45.00 was transferred to the card. On June 22, 2026, there was a charge at a local restaurant for $10.23.

On July 23, 2026, I spoke with Brooke Landis as I had some follow-up questions. She informed me that there were two purchases on the card in May (after Michele Hitsman had been suspended). She stated that a replacement card arrived at the facility on June 3, 2026, and the meal purchased on June 22, 2026, was for Resident A. She also informed me that the new card is safeguarded at the facility, in the zipper pouch, and staff are now keeping the receipts.

As a part of this investigation, I reviewed the change in status form, which documented that the last date Michele Hitsman worked was April 7, 2026. It was also noted that she has been terminated (document signed by Beacon Administration on 6/11/26).

On July 27, 2026, I conducted the exit conference with Nichole VanNiman, Licensee Designee. We discussed the investigation and my recommendations. She informed me that she was aware of the allegations and had been checking into the matter. She voiced concerns as the bank card shouldn't be leaving the facility, unless the resident is going with them (staff). She informed me that staff should not be taking the bank card or all their cash to the store, without documenting what they are doing. She stated that things were not matching up, and they have been trying to get a hold of Michele Hitsman to determine where the additional funds are. She agreed to submit a written corrective action plan to address the established violation.

On this same date, during the follow-up phone call, I informed Nichole VanNiman about Guardian A1 having difficulty getting through to someone to answer her questions, and that Guardian A1 stated she had written a letter to her (Nichole VanNiman), voicing her concerns. Nichole VanNiman confirmed that she had received the letter and had been in contact with human resources. She also stated they were waiting for the investigation to be concluded. Nichole VanNiman informed me that she would be following up with Guardian A1 regarding these matters.

APPLICABLE RULE	
R 400.681	**Resident rights; licensee responsibilities.**
	(1) A resident shall be treated with dignity and respect, free from exploitation, and protected and safe.
ANALYSIS:	Based upon my investigation, which consisted of an unannounced on-site investigation, interviews with staff and administration, the guardian, and coordination with law enforcement and APS, it's concluded that a staff member accessed Resident A's funds on an regular basis, including multiple ATM withdrawals and there is no proof that the funds or purchases were received by Resident A, as evidenced by receipts, documentation or description of the items purchased or the cash. Resident A is a vulnerable adult who relies on others to care for him, including making financial decisions. Based upon this information, it's concluded that there is a preponderance of evidence to support the allegations that Resident A was not treated with dignity and respect, he has been subjected to financial exploitation.
CONCLUSION:	**VIOLATION ESTABLISHED**

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Contingent upon receipt of an acceptable written corrective action plan, it's recommended that the status of the license remains unchanged.

Mahtina Rubritius

7/24/2026

Mahtina Rubritius Date
Licensing Consultant

Approved By:

Dawn Timm

07/24/2026

Dawn N. Timm Date
Area Manager