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SB624

Health – Mobile Response and Stabilization System for Children and Families in Maryland – Study

Favorable

My story is not very different than what you would hear from hundreds of families in Maryland. I have a son, now 12, who has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder. He repeatedly goes into crisis – throwing things around and threatening to hurt himself or other members of the family. I have tried calling the mobile crisis team in Baltimore County a number of times and have never gotten help – they are either too far away, or at another crisis. One time they just told me to take my child to the emergency department. So when my son goes into crisis I call the police. Some are very helpful and know how to talk to my child. Others have no training and end up putting him in handcuffs and taking him to the emergency department.

We have had multiple stays in emergency departments. We have waited up to four days in EDs (one to three days is not uncommon), because of backed up inpatient units. When my son is in the ED, I am required to stay with him at all times. When I was a single mom I had no idea how I would have my other child taken care of. This is a tremendous hardship on the entire family. Sometimes my son would stabilize as we lingered in an ED, waiting for an inpatient bed, so I would just take him home.

My son now is involved with juvenile services, which might have been avoided with the right crisis intervention. My son was in crisis and wanted to elope from school. A school staff person tried to reason with him and my son slapped him in the face. The staff pressed charges, so my son now has an assault charge on his record.

My son is on Maryland Medicaid, so all of these ED visits and inpatient stays come at a significant cost to the state. How much better it would be for everyone if a mobile team, trained in children's mental health services, could come out to the house and help to stabilize him. This would be beneficial to the school too, because sometimes he goes into crisis there.

Thank you for reading my story.

Please give SB 624 a favorable report.