

FAVORABLE: HB847 State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Jenn Lynn and I am mom of a of 17 year old with multiple diagnoses : autism, mood disorder, ADHD, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, sensory processing disorder among other learning disabilities. I am also the Executive Director of a nonprofit in Montgomery County serving roughly 500 adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. I sit on the Youth and Family subcommittee of the Lt. Governors Commission to study Mental and Behavioral Health issues , and the Commission for people with Disabilities in Montgomery County.

As an Autism mom, I am in full support HB 847 as it is desperately needed for our growing population of individuals with Autism and co-morbid mental health challenges.

Imagine your loved one so scared and confused by the stimulating world around them, that they can do nothing but lash out physically to calm themselves.... You're exhausted from keeping them alive day to day, minute to minute, you need help.

This was our life.

Recently, Our son was rushed to the hospital after becoming so scared he jumped from my moving car in DC. When I pulled him back inside the car, injuring my own shoulder, he stabbed himself 9 times with a pen.

Due to our current system in Maryland, we had to live in the busy ER for nearly 5 days, awaiting an autism psychiatric bed to open up at the state's premiere psych hospital.

The wait was too long. He was instead sent to the adolescent male unit. In the next 10 traumatizing days, he witnessed kids getting yelled at, chemically sedated to avoid challenging behaviors, and criticized by staff. He was shown videos that have been scarred into his brain... which he relives every time he closes his eyes.

Upon discharge, after the 10 days allotted by insurance, we had no one to help us and no where to go. We were told to put our child into foster care and relinquish our parental rights so he will be helped.

Helpless and nearly hopeless, We risked all of our lives and brought him home.

Marylanders deserve organized and efficient care, Not waitlists and Voicemail's. We need one office familiar with all the services, public and private, to guide families through crises. A services manager supported by stakeholders statewide.

As for Jake, the nationally decorated Chief Autism Ambassador for MC-PD, he is living 100 miles from home. His heartbreaking relocation to find appropriate services, has brought his valuable law enforcement trainings about de-escalation and autism, to a screeching halt.

More indecision on this issue will cost valuable lives.

Thank you.

Peace and Gratitude,

Jenn Lynn

TheWorldAccordingtoJake.com

<https://matteroffact.tv/a-teen-with-autism-helping-police-learn-to-help-those-in-a-mental-health-crisis/>