

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL #HB1476

### Independent Oversight and Review Board for Health Care of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities-Establishment

**Date:** February 26, 2020

**From:** Sallie C. Sterling

**To:** Chairman Luke Clippinger, Madame Chair Vanessa Atterbeary and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

**Re:** SUPPORT FOR BILL#HB1476

I testified in Annapolis last year regarding inmate healthcare. At that time my son was close to release. He has been in the community now for 11 months. In those last months of his incarceration in 2019, he had been taken off of medications because the psychiatrist whom he had been seeing at MCTC had a health crisis and was replaced by another M.D. who took him off of his meds to re-evaluate. That never happened and he was released in April 2019 with no medications. This is an individual who had first been medicated by a child psychiatrist at age 5. The prison is way understaffed with psychiatrists.

My son was not able to see a psychiatrist for a month after his release. Currently he is taking 3 different psych meds. The individual who is having to transition back into the community is more likely to succeed if he/she has a support system. What is often left unspoken is the impact of all of this on that individual's family- spouse, children, parents, siblings. As a parent, it is a stress that I can not even begin to describe. You want what is best for the former inmate but hanging in there with him/her can be debilitating. Now I am getting into access to healthcare upon release. This is made far too complicated by the fact that healthcare within those prison walls is woefully inadequate. The inmate often has to beg to GET to medical.

This bill addresses the oversight of healthcare in Maryland prisons. If there is to be reform in this area, it begins here. My son has several healthcare issues that will follow him for the remainder of his life. His mental health issues now include PTSD just from having to survive in the prison culture. Please support HB 1476.

Respectfully submitted,

Sallie C. Sterling