

**Testimony for H.B. 1344**

**Health and Government Operations Committee. Hearing: March 19, 2021**

**From: E. Fuller Torrey, M.D. The Stanley Medical Research Institute, 10605 Concord St., Ste 206, Kensington, MD 20895**

**Position: SUPPORT**

My name is E. Fuller Torrey, MD and I am submitting testimony in favor of HB 1344. I am a psychiatrist and have been licensed to practice since 1970. At various times I have provided psychiatric care for individuals with serious mental illness in California, New York, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. I also had a sister with schizophrenia who is now deceased.

Among the four jurisdictions in which I have provided psychiatric services, Maryland is by far the most difficult to provide timely care for individuals with serious mental illness. The main reason for this is the Maryland danger standard which is both inadequate and unrealistic. It does not take into account the reality that many people with serious mental illness are unaware of their own illness because of changes in the brain which are a consequence of the disease process. I have seen patients deteriorate faster in Maryland than they would have if they lived in most of the other states.

On a personal level the inadequacy of the Maryland danger standard was a determining factor in my decision regarding my sister's treatment. As the last surviving family member I wanted to transfer my sister's care from New York State to Maryland so that she would be closer to me. However, I realized that, because of the inadequate Maryland laws, it would be much more difficult to ensure that she would receive adequate care here.

I urge Maryland legislators to revise and update HB 1344.

Sincerely,

E. Fuller Torrey, M.D.

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