

SB 255

Public Health – Home- and Community-Based Services for Children and Youth

Senate Finance Committee

February 14, 2023

SUPPORT

I strongly support SB 255.

I live in North Potomac, MD and am the mom of two adopted, mentally ill children – Anabel (9) from Florida and Sam (14) from Colombia.

Sam struggled with mental illness and physical and verbal aggression towards my husband and myself before the COVID-19 pandemic, but his symptoms only intensified during the course of 2020 to the point that he was in and out of a psychiatric hospital and eventually placed in residential treatment from March 2021 through November 2021.

Following residential discharge, we were very lucky that Sam immediately transitioned to the Sheppard Pratt Care & Connections short-term program. The Sheppard Pratt team worked hard to get Sam into the Targeted Case Management (TCM) program because **they knew that we needed long-term support and they thought that support could come through TCM, but I can tell you it has not.**

My family felt all alone with a child who still struggles with significant mental illness after the Sheppard Pratt Care & Connections program ended, and we were left with just TCM.

We thought we were fortunate to get one of the 50 slots of TCM for families with a child who is not Medicaid-eligible. We were wrong.

There were services and resources that we were told we'd have access to as part of TCM – which has turned out not to be true.

The director of our county's TCM program told us that we'd have a care coordinator to serve as an ongoing resource. We have not! I can count on one hand the number of times that I have spoken to that care coordinator in the course of the past year, and she has definitely not served as a resource or support.

We were told that they would be able to provide in home therapy and support, something that is impossible to get with our private insurance. After entering the program, we learned that

they could NOT provide that and, in fact, no therapeutic services have been provided to us at all.

The provider of TCM for my county has provided nothing of value for our family and has left us to navigate the maze that is the mental health care system by ourselves.

We are all alone and that should not be the case in a state like ours. There needs to be an intermediate level of care for families like mine – TCM needs to be strengthened.

I urge you to pass SB 255.

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