

## HB 121 – Mental Health- Treatment Plan for Individuals in Facilities- Requirements

February 3, 2023

Position: Support

As the child of a Father with bipolar disorder who has been hospitalized multiple times and the mother of a son with behavioral health challenges, as well as someone who has been diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), I have experienced first-hand how important it is to have the correct treatment plan in place. When my loved ones experience a mental health crisis, we rely on medical professionals to lead us out of a place of crisis. In my experience, my father, son and I all received incorrect diagnoses in our mental health journey before receiving the right one. I believe this is a common occurrence and happens with even the most skilled mental health professionals.

In the 1970s, when my father was first admitted to a hospital in Maryland during an episode of psychosis, the staff assumed he was using substances and initially treated him accordingly and he was not improving. When my mom visited him, she said he seemed like he was no longer there mentally and heavily medicated. As time went on, she feared she was losing her husband. After a month of no improvement, eventually staff worked closely with his immediate family to understand what his symptoms were, and he was accurately diagnosed with bipolar disorder a few weeks later. The correct medication and treatment plan were in place, and he was able to be discharged.

For me personally, in my twenties, when I was dealing with ruminating thoughts and at the time when my undiagnosed OCD symptoms were the most severe, I was prescribed the wrong medication and multiple incorrect diagnoses before receiving the correct care. I was put on antipsychotics due to my intrusive thoughts and I became extremely depressed, and my OCD symptoms got worse. It was then, my family was able to advocate on my behalf to discuss what my symptoms were leading up to this episode and eventually get the right treatment plan in place.

With so many mental health conditions mimicking each other during these intense crisis episodes, it is imperative that hospital staff consult with the patient's family to come up with the best treatment plan. If someone is not improving and was given a diagnosis and treatment based solely on that initial diagnosis, I fear that they will never get better. Family input and scheduled reassessments are imperative to better outcomes.

Therefore, I urge you to pass HB 121.

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