

## HB576 Testimony

S.MORRIS, Montgomery County

Position: FAVORABLE

My daughter has been hospitalized eight times, (this also includes a suicide attempt in July 2023), and she is currently hospitalized, because Maryland does not offer Assisted Outpatient Treatment. I had to file an Emergency Evaluation Petition for her twice, because she destroyed her sister's room and her room. She took a bat and destroyed everything. She was missing for four days and was drinking and smoking. She does not believe she is not well. She was harassing people at gas station and threw stuff all over the floor. They had to shut down the gas station for about forty-five minutes to clean it up. Luckily, someone recognized, that she was unstable and called the police and they transported her to the hospital. This could have been worse, what if someone reacted, and attacked her? She could also have been arrested, when clearly, she is unstable.

She would be assessed at the hospital, they would call and ask me a million and one questions and agree that she needs help, but still discharge her in two weeks. This is an unsafe discharge because, she is still not well. One time, she was discharged to a Homeless Shelter, and I was not informed that she was discharged. She could have been killed, attacked, or picked up by a sex trafficker. It seems that the social workers are so desensitized and do not care about the individual patient. No one at the hospital has ever called to discuss what her illness is about and how we can help her. I called and leave messages for the doctor, therapist, social worker and no one returns my call.

It also appears, that even though, it is clear the person is still unstable, they are discharged without any follow up medical care and therapy. Discharging an unstable puts the person suffering from the illness and the community in danger. This reoccurring cycle of in and out of the hospital and discharged two weeks later and back again in the hospital the next, day, week, or month must end. This only creates additional stress on family members and create more mental instability. This also can create depression and anxiety in family members.

We must end this vicious cycle. Mental illness is not to be taken lightly, too many have died, abused, and imprisoned, this could be avoided. I know and believe that, establishing an Assisted Outpatient Treatment as supported by SAMHSA in Maryland is a GREAT step towards helping our community with mental illness. This Program has proven results, the statistics are there, revealing reduction of homelessness, incarceration, victimization, drug use and even hospitalization.

PLEASE GIVE A FAVORBLE REPORT TO HB576