Testimony for HB1014
February 24, 2026; House Health Committee
From: Z.A., Montgomery County
Position: Support

As a grieving mother who recently lost her precious son to suicide, I want to tell how the current danger standard contributed to his death in the hope that no one else goes through what I am going through. It was his (third) suicide attempt and he was again in the ICU for days. After he was medically stable, he was evaluated for involuntary certification for transfer to the psychiatric unit. However, he said he was no longer feeling suicidal and did not agree to be admitted to the psychiatric unit. Therefore, he was released without taking into consideration his documented recent history of multiple suicide attempts and bipolar depression. That did not meet their interpretation of Maryland's danger standard for involuntary hospital admission because he did not say he was still suicidal. They sent him back to his home without giving him any psychiatric treatment after a serious suicide attempt. He died by suicide days later.

My son suffered from schizophrenia and anosognosia. Because of the illness he was unable to recognize that he was ill and needed treatment. He was hospitalized many times over the years. Often, after a few days, he was released prematurely because even though he refused medication he did not meet the danger standard for involuntary hospitalization, although it was clear he could not meet his basic needs. After each episode there was less recovery.

A year and a half ago, things had gotten much worse. He stopped showering, eating, and talking, saying things like he didn't want to live. Clearly, he had all the signs and symptoms of someone being dangerous to himself. I repeatedly conveyed my concern to his care team each time that he was in the hospital, but each time, he was not taken to a hearing for involuntary treatment because being unable to care for oneself was not considered a danger to self.

My son continued having major depression and was unable to keep a job. Sadly, there was nothing I could do except watch my son deteriorate in front of my eyes until he once again met the stringent danger standard.

There is not a day that I don't think about him. I wonder if he would still be here if Maryland's danger standard had not repeatedly blocked his access to critical hospital psychiatric care.

I ask the committee in their evaluation to look at how laws can protect individuals with serious mental illness who are in crisis and to **define the danger standard to include the inability to care for themselves and deterioration likely to result in the inability to care for self**.

If this legislation had been in place, to facilitate treatment, my son could have had a chance to be alive today. Therefore, I urge the committee to vote in favor of this legislation.