

**TESTIMONY
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
HOUSE BILL 5810
MARCH 12, 2008**

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My name is Charles Mims, Advocate Organizer with Advocacy Unlimited; I am here to speak in support House Bill 5810 which address the concerns of emergency room out comes for people with behavioral health issues. There are many aspects of this bill that are positive and encouraging; first that geographic areas with medically underserved populations will be targeted and methodologies for improving services explored. Secondly issues of overcrowding and backlog will be addressed. One the most important aspects of this bill is having on-site community based behavioral health providers available on-site. I have always believed that there should be patient advocates on-site in emergency rooms; I believe this would reduce dramatically misunderstandings and friction; and it would make people feel more at ease knowing that there is someone who can advocate for them if need be. I am very encouraged and please to see this type of legislation, please pass this bill.