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Advocacy Unlimited
2/18/09

"DSS Public Hearing"

My name is Paul Clark, and I was diagnosed with manic-depression in September of 2000 during the first semester of my senior year in college. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Health Science and I have worked in the mental health field. I have seen the mental health system from the inside out.

Over the past eight and a half years I have been hospitalized multiple times in inpatient and outpatient treatment centers all over the country from Portland, Maine; to New York City; to Nashville, Tennessee; to San Francisco, California; to Waterbury, Connecticut.

It has taken me, the last eight and a half years, to learn about my warning signs and symptoms; to find the right combination of medication and therapy; to gain valuable insight and awareness about my medical condition; and to finally become stable and remain stable. I continue to learn more about myself and my mental illness with each passing day.

I know what my life is like when I take psychotropic medications and I also know what my life is like when I do not take psychotropic medications. Today I choose to take psychotropic medications, and with the help of my psychiatrist I have found a combination of meds that work for me, and they are a major part of my recovery.

Unfortunately psychiatry is not a perfect science and there is no magic pill to treat people with mental illness. Over the last eight and a half years I have been on over twelve different types of psychotropic medications before finding the combination that I take today. Any psychiatrist will tell you that everyone's brain chemistry is different, and people respond differently to different types of medication, this is a known fact.

Connecticut currently protects open access to psychiatric medication by exempting psychiatric drugs from the state's preferred drug list (PDL), and providing Medicare part D wraparound coverage for those dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare. It would behoove the state of Connecticut to continue these protections to ensure that people with mental illness have access to all psychotropic medications, and to keep medical costs within the state from skyrocketing. It is no secret that psych meds are expensive; it is also no secret that psychotropic medications help millions of people. Maybe we should all take a closer look at the drug companies who seem to be profiting off of our mental illnesses. Governor Rell has made it clear that cuts need to be made in the budget. Please do not cut someone's lifeline.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns.