

Testimony before the Public Health Committee
March 12, 2010
Support for SB 405

My name is Sandy Quarto and I live in Norwich, CT. I am also a member of NAMI-CT. I am writing to express my support for SB 405. Our 27 year old daughter Kristina is being discharged from Natchaug Hospital today. She has schizophrenia. This is her fourth hospitalization, and the third within a year. Each time it begins with a psychotic episode and she is taken to the emergency room. She has stayed 4-5 weeks each time in three different hospitals.

Kristy, and others with a serious mental illness, need supportive housing for many reasons. It would be much less costly in the long run. Kristy would receive the kind of support she needs, to keep her on medication. With employment services, she would be able to work again, decreasing the need for state support (SSI and SSD).

Today Kristy will go home to her studio apartment, probably stop taking her medication and return to the hospital within weeks. This happens for two reasons: The side effects of psychotropic medicine are very daunting and she is not in the hospital long enough for them to subside before she gets out. She also needs more time in the hospital to gain the insight she needs to begin recovery. She is discharged each time because her insurance runs out, even though she has told us she is delusional when she is discharged. Natchaug Hospital has kept her for a week without insurance coverage, and she has received excellent care.

Supportive housing is very important for individuals with mental illness. There is no affordable, permanent housing option with support services for those leaving the hospital after acute care. Please pass the SB 405 bill so that Kristy and others like her can begin their recovery in a setting that provides the services they desperately need. Please dedicate any funds saved by the closing of Cedar Crest to supportive housing and community based services for people with mental illness.

Thank you for remembering our daughter, Kristy, when passing bill SB 405.

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