

**Testimony for Insurance & Real Estate Committee**

**In Support of SB 877 -- February 10, 2011**

**Barbara Albert**

Good afternoon members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, also to everyone else.

My name is Barbara Albert, renter in Harford, registered voter, advocate for Human Rights, and multiply medically challenged human being. I'm on Disability, Medicare, and Medicaid since the late '80s.

This is my testimony concerning raised bill S.B.No.877, An Act Concerning Mental Health Parity. I do understand that The Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act of 2008 is a Federal Law that was passed 18 years after the Americans with Disabilities Act, and was supposed to be nationally implemented July of 2010. I say 'supposed to' because for me, I'm grateful to have access to other qualified physicians. For what I most need, however, is a qualified therapist. It's year number four now, and it's not for lack of looking, going, and finding no qualified help. My medication management doctor is still only receiving 55% payment. Why? He's also my 15 – 20 minute, once a month therapist. I also have problems accessing my prescriptions.

This is not parity, equivalence, equal coverage. Mental health disorders should and must be treated like any other health disorder. Demand for mental health services has increased yet these services have neither improved nor increased significantly over the years.

Article 25 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights says, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, and MEDICAL CARE, and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

Thank you for listening.