

Moniz-Carroll, Rhonda

From: Candice Bohr <CBohr@newtownyouthandfamilyservices.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 12:34 PM
To: JudTestimony
Cc: Sen. Hwang, Tony
Subject: SB 1108

To Whom It May Concern;

I am writing as the Executive Director of Newtown Youth and Family Services. We are the designated mental health agency for the Town of Newtown/Sandy Hook. NYFS is a licensed, non-profit, mental health clinic and youth service bureau. We provide outpatient individual, couple, and family counseling and substance abuse treatment services. In addition we offer prevention initiatives, after school, evening and weekend programs and support groups to promote individual and community wellness as well as provide support in the Newtown School District.

We had been providing mental health services for the community prior to the Sandy Hook Shooting, but now our services are in greater demand. Our numbers of mental health clients have increased by 191% since 2012. We have also noticed when there is a "lock down" or "lock in" at the Newtown Schools or a nearby school has a security issue or threat it negatively impacts many Newtown teachers, students, and parents. People who have lost their sense of security can be easily re-triggered by similar events. Even now, over two years after our school shooting, many people are instantaneously brought back to that day when their concept of a safe work and school environment was shattered. Some people experience flashbacks as if they are reliving the event, while others may have intrusive thoughts they can not control. Nightmares, anxiety attacks, school/work avoidance, irritability and problems focusing are other symptoms that continue to disrupt people's lives.

Our hopes are that people understand the severity of their threats and how it has a lifelong impact on those around them.

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