

Insurance and Real Estate Committee
February 27, 2020

Testimony in Support of:

H.B. No. 5248, H.B. No. 5254, An Act Establishing A Task Force To Study Health Insurance Coverage for Peer Support Services In This State.

H.B. No. 5254, An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage For Medication-Assisted Treatment For Opioid Use Disorder

H.B. No. 5256 An Act Concerning Required Health Insurance Coverage For Detoxification And Substance Abuse Services

Co-Chairs Scanlon and Lesser; Vice Chairs Dathan and Hartley; Ranking Member Pavalock-D'Amato and Kelly; and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

My name is Sharon Dean.

This epidemic has hit my family in too many ways. My 30 year old niece passed away from an opioid overdose, leaving three young daughters behind. As time went on I found out my own daughter had a problem. After becoming dependent on her depression medication she became addicted to heroin. She has overdosed and had to be narcaned in the past and I have been raising her two children. We need more help for this problem. It's hard to get into a program because there aren't enough beds available. Also due to insurance companies denying to pay for more then 30 days. How can any insurance company know how long someone needs medical treatment? They aren't in the medical field! We are losing too many people. On August 10, 2019 our life's came to a stop. My family loss my 20 year old grandson. Something has to change! He was looking for help! In May he was seeking help because he relapsed after being three years clean. when he finally found a place he had to go to New Jersey because there weren't any beds available in Connecticut. And he had a time limit to get there or the bed was going to someone else. After the long ride he was three minutes late and they weren't going to give him the bed. This has got to change! After he was there for 28 days, he called home upset telling his parents that he wasn't ready to leave. He asked for more time because he knew he still needed treatment. But the insurance company denied him the extension. Instead he had to do out patient care. He was going to meetings three times a week and working a good job. After being out of treatment for less then two months and going to his out patient meetings including on August 8, 2019 my grandson relapsed in the late hours of August 9 into August 10, 2019. He was seen at the hospital and released to the local police. The police did a suicide screening on him in the early hours of August 10th and he failed. The local police released him knowing he had an addiction problem in the past and he failed a suicide screening! Within hours my grandson was found dead in a trap house well known to our local police department. Something has to be done. The system failed my grandson n more then one way.

I am urging you to consider these bills to ensure insurance companies are required to provide help to those seeking services and to utilize MAT as a standard form of treatment, the data suggests this is one of the most successful ways to help those recovering from addiction.