

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 Cynthia Fusco.

Steven, my son, is in recovery almost 2-1/2 years. I am so proud of the man he has become.

It wasn't easy getting here. It was a battle for my son. As his mom I would ride around looking for my son. I was living in chaos to save my son's life. I was sick and tired of the in/out of detox and rehabs that the overnight stays were not long enough for him to get healthy. It was always about the insurance company. 28-days is not enough for someone who had used for years and cried out for help. OD and released only to use again. Detox would not take him unless he had drugs in his system. So he'd have to medicate in order to get a bed at detox. A horrible roller coaster ride - death cycle that no parent, spouse or friend should have to watch. Too many deaths related to those battling the opioid epidemic as they are not receiving treatment due to insurance denials and not having dirty urine to get a detox bed. The wait for a detox bed is undefinable. 110 beds in CT especially with an epidemic this is crazy.

After many misdemeanor arrests, he finally hit bottom 2-1/2 years ago when I refused to bail him out of jail. Let me tell you my sons arrests were not criminal - he did not steal or rob anyone. His arrests were related to drugs. I saved his life as well as the judge who sentenced him to WCCI. He participated in the 2nd Chance Program and was involved in many groups and received certificates. He completed his parole without any violations. He is now in probation without any violations.

My son is a college graduate. Since being home he has applied to many job opportunities, passed the initial background check/urine testing, only to find out 2 weeks into every job, the final background check shows a different person on paper than the person he is and his employment is

suspended. No felonies only misdemeanors. Where is prison reform? Are there any re-entry programs? My son has humbled himself. I would love for him to share his story with you.

Personally, I know many people who have lost their lives to opioids. The statistics are going the wrong way.

I am behind the Brian Cody's Law because reform needs to happen today - not next year - NOW!

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.