

Testimony before the Mental Health Subcommittee

January 29, 2013

John Lewis

My name is John Lewis.

I've been getting services for over 20 years at BHcare, formerly known as Birmingham Group Health Services. The services have helped me to stay out of the hospital and have an independent and healthy life.

I came to BHcare (formally known as Birmingham Group Health Services) to be trained in a vocational program called Janitorial Training Program. I learned skills to be a janitor in 12 weeks. They even employed me as a janitor after that. I worked at Pro-Kleen for 2 years.

I had case management services for many years until they graduated me. I do most things on my own. I also continue to use the therapist and psychiatrist services at our clinic. Staff encourages me to have a voice about my treatment.

I use our Benefits Counselor to help me to manage my benefits.

When I first went to the Valley Social Club staff and members were very welcoming. They treated me as a person not a person with an illness.

They encouraged me to try different activities and participate in just about everything. Staff encouraged me to be a greeter at our "May is Mental Health", Luncheon with the Commissioner of Mental Health. I really like doing this because I can welcome other clubs and staff to our club. I like going to other clubs. We have been able to make new friends all over the state this way. I enjoy going to the LOB with staff and meeting our Legislators' and Representatives.

The club helped me to stay healthy with activities such as hiking, nutrition groups etc...

When I go to the social Club we get treated respectfully. We get to learn good social skills. We go on to trips. We have fun doing it all!

Being around positive people at the center helped me to be on the right track. It helped me to feel positive about myself and to keep believe there's always help for recovery.

Thank you all!