

TESTIMONY AT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS HEARING

SEPT. 12, 2013

I HAVE HAD THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF A LOVED ONE WHO IS A RESIDENT OF KENT COUNTY AND UNINSURED AND THE INABILITY TO RECEIVE APPROPRIATE AND TIMELY HELP FROM THE KENT CO COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AGENCY CURIOUSLY NAMED NETWORK 180.

THIS PERSON HAD NO PRIOR CONTACT WITH MENTAL HEALTH AGENCY BUT WAS BEGINNING TO SUFFER EXTREME PANIC ATTACKS AND FEAR OF GROUPS OF PEOPLE.

ATTEMPTS TO RECEIVE HELP FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AGENCY WERE THWARTED. THE Agency said the only help the loved one could receive would be to come to a group meeting in about a month. When told that the person was unable to be in groups, we were referred to 100 dollar an hour private counselors. Where would someone who cannot afford health insurance , whose employer did not provide insurance coverage, get 100 dollars an hour.

I cannot say if this is the norm or not for those seeking mental health assistance in our community. If it is Standard operating procedure, the procedure needs a whole lot of improvement on the front line as well as some compassion.

Hopefully, the Commission will seek greater resources. More frontline Resources are needed beyond offering a group meeting. This person got lucky with a local clinic doctor and the help of an affordable Western Michigan University Counseling program. But really it was just good fortune. It could just as well been tragic.

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