

From: Marquita.Duval@bhcpns.org [mailto:Marquita.Duval@bhcpns.org]
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2009 12:25 PM
To: EBSA, E-OHPSCA - EBSA
Subject:

I am a mental health consumer and a Peer Specialist in Pensacola, FL. I work for Lakeview Center. I am writing in response to a request of information from your office. I have depression, ADD and I am a recovering alcoholic. I am confronted everyday with consumers that I cannot help because their Medicare will not cover extended treatment, or sober housing, or medications they need- and the government says are too expensive, or they cannot afford transportation to counseling, or we cannot put them in a respite bed overnight because there are not enough beds--so we have to put them in crisis beds- that are much more expensive, or Medicare only pays for 30 days of substance abuse treatment and they need more, they could live independently, with supported housing- and Medicare doesn't pay for that- or any other choices that could help them live more normal independent lives. We cannot provide many services that would benefit our clients simply because their insurance (Medicare) does not offer them the same options and support for their mental health that it provides for their medical care. I truly believe that if the government could provide parity for these services, that in the long run they would save money. When they cannot get services they need they do not have coping skills or their disease is such that they end up in a crisis, simply because they couldn't get their medicine, or they get frustrated and just don't take any medicine, and end up in a crisis. They can't get help here, and end up in Emergency rooms and hospitals, because they had no alternative, or just get so upset that the ER Doctors Baker Act them, and they end up again- in high cost beds because we could not provide services they needed that could have prevented them going to a hospital. I am extremely blessed because I am able to work and get insurance at this time, but I have been the consumer that couldn't find help because I had no money and no insurance, and I can tell you, I have ended up in a crisis bed or ER simply because I had no alternative, and these experiences traumatized me even further and my recovery that much longer and more painful. I could see no other way out at times because my depression had worsened because I could not afford my medicine. I beg of you to help those that cannot help themselves and have come to believe they do not deserve help. I'm positive that it would save untold amounts of money, and more importantly, immense suffering. Thank you so much for any help you can provide, Marquita Duval CRPS 850-469-3715

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