

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL #HB1476

Independent Oversight and Review Board for Health Care of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities-Establishment

Date: 03/02/2020

From: Julie Magers

To: Chairman Luke Clippinger, Madame Chair Vanessa Atterbeary and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

Re: SUPPORT FOR BILL#HB1476

My name is Julie Magers and I am a directly impacted family member of a man who is currently incarcerated for a non-violent property crime with Multiple Sclerosis. Since he has been incarcerated for the past five years, he has been denied healthcare for his chronic illnesses to the point that he is now sight impaired, hearing impaired and mobility impaired. He has gaping sores all over his body that have ignored, he has issues getting his medications, he has been given other people's medications, he has been denied prescribed medications, he has been misdiagnosed, has had stabbing injuries and burns from when he was caught on fire multiple times ignored, he has been abused by healthcare staff, has had his medical records tampered with by medical staff, has been denied access to his medical records, and has been denied mental health treatment for his PTSD, depression, and anxiety. As a family member and as his advocate, I have had to spend every week fighting with the correctional facilities and DPSCS with one egregious healthcare issue or another. His dental care has been neglected so badly that he only has 9 teeth left and at one point he had five teeth pulled in one day without anesthesia and not only was given no antibiotics (which is a minimum standard of care) but they did not stitch up the holes leaving tissue hanging from his mouth—I personally witnessed this. His physical and mental condition has deteriorated so badly from deliberate indifference to his healthcare that he is permanently disabled. His family and children have drastically suffered due to the negligent behavior of the facility, the healthcare providers and DPSCS. As his legal and medical power of attorney and his advocate, I was able to obtain his medical records from DPSCS that carried an extremely expensive price tag that most families could never afford; he has been trying for 18 months to get his own and has been denied, interrogated and ignored. I and the MPRC, sent the records out for an independent review by a Johns Hopkins physician expert in Neurology and what was revealed was appalling and PROVING EXACTLY WHY INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT IS NEEDED. The lack of healthcare is the direct result of his disabilities and permanent irreversible damage, the physicians DPSCS has in "chronic care" are not even certified to treat him, he has been denied the minimum standard of care for MS for years, the minimum acceptable standard for his disability aides was not followed (ADA violation), his care is equal to negligence (8th amendment violation), and that the oath of healthcare professionals was NOT upheld nor was the contract with the State. This man has suffered cruelly through no fault of his own because there is no proper and adequate oversight and regulation. There are at least 8000 more individuals in his same position; he is NOT an isolated case. I have personally worked with countless chronically ill individuals, those with infectious disease, mental health issues and substance use disorder that are experiencing the same heinous level of healthcare neglect and it needs to stop. This legislation will assist with this by providing the independent oversight and regulation that is so direly needed as our independent review

has proven. We are asking you to do what is within your power to make long term impactful change. This Board will open communication and allow for the checks and balances to prevent hundreds of thousands of individuals and their families from suffering unnecessarily. It will also prevent costly damages; the cost of this Board is far lower than the cost of liability and the cost to our families and communities. Incarcerated individuals who are medically and mentally debilitated by a lack of care WILL RELAPSE, they WILL RECOMMIT, they WILL SELF MEDICATE, they WILL NOT GET BETTER and the lack of care is partially if not wholly responsible for that unless we do something about it NOW! This is a commonsense bill that will produce the checks and balances needed and ultimately save lives, families and communities as well as assist the Department in making needed improvements.

For these reasons, I am asking for a favorable report on HB1476.

Respectfully,

Julie Magers

Frederick County