

Greetings,

My name is Patricia Cully, and I am a member of NAMI. I'm from Howard County, Ellicott City, District 9B.

I'm here to advocate for the Fail Therapy/Fail First Revisions, SB0990 (HB1423). We have three children with major depression and anxiety. Two have also been diagnosed with ADHD. I'm here today to ask for your support for mental health services.

Our daughters have worked very hard and received both cognitive treatment and medication therapy. Two of our daughters were admitted to the hospital for in-patient care. They assessed the illness and received medication and then were discharged. After-hospital services were managed by our family, there were not referred to any follow-on programs.

My youngest daughter had tried meds and they failed. She wanted to try transcranial magnetic stimulation aka TMS as this had been the one treatment that had worked for both of her sisters. Insurance said she would have to fail two additional times, or wait an additional 3-6 months, before they would approve her for TMS therapy. She was struggling to go to work every day and couldn't understand why she couldn't get approval for this treatment.

There are a lot of side effects with these medications, and it can take a minimum of 4-6 weeks of treatment or longer, for a doctor to determine if the medication is effective for the patient. If they must switch to another medication, many times they must come off one medication, or taper, before they can start a new one. There is a higher risk of self-harm for the first 2-3 weeks on a new medication.

We had to work with her doctor and do multiple appeals with her insurance company, while she was struggling with major depression and anxiety, to get TMS approved for our youngest daughter. During that time, additional stress was placed on our daughter as she navigated her mental illness while attempting to perform at work. She was constantly worried she would lose her job and then she would have to break her lease. Luckily, with her doctor's support, the request was approved within a couple of months and the TMS treatment was highly successful.

I'm happy to share that with their hard work and the help of professionals, they have all finished college. Two of them completed master's degrees, they are all in long time relationships and have careers.

Thank you for reading my story.

Can I count on your support for HB1423, STEP therapy/fail-first revisions, and to protect mental health services—and give families the hope of recovery?

Thank you

Patricia Cully