

My name is Judy Thompson and I am a resident of St. Helens, Oregon. I'm the chairperson of NAMI Columbia County and I am urging you to support SB 763.

Thank you for inviting NAMI to be heard and present testimony allowing us to share our experiences with our loved ones being hospitalized or committed for care.

Twenty years ago, our adult son was at the top of his game as a laser cutting operator with a company that wanted to make him a partner. In 1999, he experienced a psychotic break. What was to follow was a life turned upside down.

My son began to have the auditory and visual symptoms, paranoid thoughts, and was frustrated because he thought he could communicate telepathically with us. We all agreed to go to the hospital, contacting his mental health provider after hours.

During the time we waited for the provider to determine whether or not our son should go to the hospital, he left our home. We spent hours looking for him. When we finally tracked him down and took him to the hospital, we faced skepticism because our son was "clean-cut." My son was admitted. It took a little over a week for my son to get stabilized and was able to come home.

Several years later, our son experienced another bout of symptoms of psychosis, even though he was taking medication. He reached out for help and was told by professionals that he was "not bad enough" to require in-patient care. Within 24 hours, he was in full-blown psychosis, and refusing treatment. For the next two years he was out of control, jailed on ten occasions, and finally transferred to the Oregon State Hospital from jail.

Our son was in county jails for four months straight and who knows how long he would have been if we were not able to advocate for him. It took five months for our son to stabilize once at OSH and return home.

Our son is lucky to be alive. Stress on all of us was off the charts. Collateral damage unmeasurable. This did not have to happen. Who knows how long he would have been if we were not able to advocate for him. It took five months for our son to stabilize and return home. Our son is lucky to be alive. Stress on all of us was off the charts. Collateral damage unmeasurable. This did not have to happen.

Our son has a limited window of opportunity to get help and get stabilized when he is starting to experience symptoms of psychosis.

Time is of essence. The longer someone must wait for the care they need, they risk deteriorating to depths that make climbing out very difficult.