

Good Morning,

My name is Michael Bowen and I a husband, father of three children and a process development Engineer for a small high tech company in Aloha. I have been a NAMI member for the last twenty years. NAMI "The national alliance on Mental illness" is a grass roots organization determined to improve the lives of those who are affected with mental illness.

I am here to talk about my son, Jacob, who was diagnosed with Paranoid schizophrenia at the age of 19.

I was told at that time that the disease was progressive and that Jacob would be in a catatonic state for the rest of his life. I remember this well because this simply did not happen. Jacob has always been strong and he fought his way back to recovery. Since that time Jacob has found a wife and they have a beautiful little girl. They bought a house together and for a while things were calm.

When Jake started to feel the weight of marriage and fatherhood things began to change. This is very common with people who have a mental illness, as we know stress is the root cause of many problems.

Being aware of this and my son's condition we sought to get him help as soon as possible. This is where my story to you begins in February 2017. At first Jake went to the hospital voluntarily and stayed for three days. Since Jake was not threatening to immediately do harm to himself or others the hospital staff explained that he did not meet the criteria to receive care in the hospital.

After returning home from the first visit things got progressively worse. He was angry because he was not getting the help he needed but the Psychosis was also taking on a stronger grip. Every time we tried to seek help we were faced with the same statement. He cannot be placed in the hospital unless we can prove that he is an imminent threat to himself or others. At that point I would ask "then you are telling me unless he physical hurts himself or someone else we cannot prove there is a need?" the answer was always yes; that is what we are saying. This was the police, the county mental health, the hospital all in sync.

I would like to take a minute to summarize. From the beginning of February until August Jake was in and out of the hospital five times. Every time we close to stabilization the hospital would release Jake because he did not meet the standard but they would freely admit that in their opinion he should remain in the hospital. Finally in late August the family was successful in getting him into the state hospital where he spent a total of 4 months. I believe this could have been prevented if the earlier interventions were allowed to complete his recovery. The total time in the hospital was 190 days totaling ~\$200,000.00? Our family personally spent ~\$20,000.00 and several days of lost time at work. The effects were wide spread, two families, neighbors, public workers, health care professionals.

At one point I asked his case manager if he could just please go to the house and provide a health check. His answer stunned me. He told me the Jake was not stable enough for him to go there is and it was not safe for him. I was also told several times that Jake was able to make his own decisions, some examples of the decisions he was making were as follows. He turned the water on with his garden hose because he had to let the demons out of the house. The water ran for 6 days and nights 24 hours a day into the

front street. He placed a bowl of raw meat in the neighbor's driveway as an offering to the demon. Meanwhile the dirty clothes, dishes and clutter was piled so high we could not climb over them, not even taking into account he would not let us in. Over and over officials in charge would tell me that the situation was no critical enough. Jake's behavior was extremely unpredictable but never criminal and it would be impossible for anybody to deny that without help there would be an outburst. Not from any malicious intent but from a very scared young man who cannot understand why when he feels so very ill the hospital tells home that he okay and he can go home. One time when I drove by to check on him I found him wandering a few blocks away from his house. To my surprise he was very happy to see me and did not want to go home but did not know where he wanted to go. I talked him into driving to the Hawthorne Center (The Hawthorne Center is an intermediate facility with on Staff health professionals). From here with the help of a Psychiatric nurse I was able to drive Jake to providence. Without her escort this would not have been possible. But again, he was released to soon.

Jake finally ended up in the state Hospital where he became stable after 4 months. Now that he was stable there was no place for him to go since he still needed full time care. It is inhumane to leave some in the Hospital if they are stable so my wife and I brought him home. It has been over a year and Jake is taking his medication and is reasonable stable but significant damage has been done.

Mental illness is complicated and I place no fault in the system. For the most I believe all the parties involved pushed whatever was legally possible but the bar for someone getting treatment is just too high and the window for significant damage without immediate care is too short

Thank you for your time