

Submitter: Beth Edens
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1113
arch 26, 202

RE: Written Testimony SB 1113

Dear Senate Committee Members,

I submit this testimony in opposition to SB 1113. I work in Family Support, and I would like to submit a very brief testimony based on my own lived experience. My daughter, Cash, is now an adult and she is comfortable with me sharing a bit about her journey. When Cash was about 13, she began showing signs of what we now know was SPMI. Her symptoms began as severe aggression, and also unsafe behaviors. She jumped off the roof of her school, and out of my moving vehicle. We didn't know she was experiencing mixed manic episodes. There was little we could do. We were instructed by the police (who were called in desperation) to go into my bedroom, with my younger daughter and the dog. My younger daughter clung to me, while the dog shook with fear. Cash ended up going to juvenile detention, where they isolated her, saying they were afraid she had hidden weapons in her long, ethnic-style braids. While isolated, she got worse. She began to see spots on the wall she thought were talking to her. She said she had never been so scared. They finally sent county mental health in to evaluate her. A referral was made to Trillium Family Services, where she was securely transported. The healing of Cash and our whole family began there. This is a very abbreviated version of the long journey of Cash's mental health, the beginning, really. The health and healing for our family could not have begun without a residential placement. All the services and supports are great, but are useless if your child jumps out of the car on the way to appointments.

As a "parent who supports other parents," I have grave concerns over the thought of losing the option of residential placement. For aggressive youth, the only other option would be OYA, and I know for my daughter that would have just allowed her mental illness to progress undiagnosed. She would have been viewed as a youth with "bad behavior," rather than a child who experiences the effects of Serious Mental Illness.

Respectfully Submitted,
Beth Edens, Cash's Mom