

Where oh Where Do We Go?

My name is Bobbi Morrow and I would like to address the issue of obtaining mental health and substance abuse treatment for my family member. The lack of continuing care and inability to find effective follow-up treatment for people with substance abuse and chronic, serious mental illness is devastating for patients and costly for Colorado.

My daughter, who is 28, has a history of serious overlapping mental illnesses, substance abuse and suicide attempts. Frequently she refuses to take her prescribed medications and uses illegal highly addictive substances instead. Since 2012 she has been placed on 13 mental health holds, 12 of which have been in the last 3 years. I will only address more recent events.

In December of 2016 she was put on a mental health hold but released and sent to Detox in Colorado Springs for Meth use. After 48 hours she was released with no attempt by the Detox facility staff to even discuss ongoing substance abuse treatment.

In February 2017 she was again arrested for substance abuse (Meth) and placed on probation for a year. Her probation officer suggested that she go into a residential substance abuse treatment program and suggested some facilities. Between my daughter and me, we called 13 programs. Some had waiting lists of several months, some would not take Medicaid or Adams County vouchers and others would only take referrals from professionals. Finally, on December 5, 2017 she went to Arapahoe House for mental health and substance abuse treatment. However, after 10 days at Arapahoe House she was placed on a mental health hold and taken to Porter Hospital. In the meantime, Arapahoe House closed so on December 28th 2017 Porter Hospital released her to a homeless shelter downtown. She was wearing paper hospital scrubs, a coat, and socks. She ended up at a Walmart parking lot in Westminster.

On January 29th, 2018 she decided to take her medications again; about sixty of them, all at once. She was taken to Aurora North following a mental health hold. Before she was released the case manager tried for several days to have her transferred to Bridge House. At first Bridge House said she wouldn't qualify and then said that they didn't have a bed available.

In September 2018 she went to a subacute treatment facility for mental health. Upon her release she requested residential drug treatment. She was denied treatment because she had been clean for 60 days in a highly structured, supervised, locked facility where she had no opportunity to use. A set up for failure again.

Last month she was arrested again for meth use after failing to participate in intensive outpatient treatment. She was placed on a civil involuntary commitment and is currently in a detox facility awaiting an available bed at an intensive residential treatment program.

With real time information on bed availability and 24/7 access to care navigation for individuals looking for help and their family members perhaps it would not take years and costly emergency services to obtain treatment for those who desperately need it.

Respectfully

Bobbi Morrow