

Senate Health & Human Services

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HB24-1217 Sharing of Patient Health-Care Information

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Christine Y For themselves	<p>My name is Dr. Christine Chao and I support this bill.</p> <p>I come wearing two hats: I am a clinical psychologist licensed in Colorado since 1984. I am a past clinical Director of the Asian Pacific Development Center, now folded into Aurora Mental Health Center.</p> <p>I also have a sister chronically and severely mentally ill.</p> <p>She has been a patient at a local mental health center who could not/would not take my calls because of HIPAA.</p> <p>My sister won't stop taking her meds, wouldn't get out of bed, wouldn't take showers. She'd become convinced staff were poisoning her food. She would refuse to go to psychiatric appointments. Finally, the crisis team would take her to an ER.</p> <p>Then began my search, mission calling around to all the different different emergency rooms trying to figure out where she was.</p> <p>Eventually, I would find out where she was and then would begin the dance.</p> <p>I called the hospital. " hi my name is Christine. I know my sister is there. May I talk to the admitting psychiatrist or the intake staff? I can give you information about about my sister's history, her past hospitalizations, What meds she's on and what meds don't work. She also has some significant health issues. I want you to know my sister has family who care. She's not just a random woman who looks like a burnt out crazy lady."</p> <p>Then a very polite person asks: "Do you have the four digit Hospital code? If your sister hasn't given that to you, we can't do anything because there are HIPAA laws. I'm sorry I can't talk to you."</p> <p>I ask, "Please could someone call me back?" NO ONE CALLS YOU BACK.</p> <p>"Now let me put on my hat as a psychologist.</p> <p>I want to hear from their family and friends, because my patient is embedded within a system of family and friends and for ongoing care and if there is a crisis, I want to be able to talk with them and work with them.</p> <p>Right now, behavioral health professionals are afraid of violating HIPAA. In this litigiousness climate, they don't want to be grieved by a licensing board, much less lose their license.</p> <p>S ok o please create friends and family input form that will give consent for sharing vital information.</p>
Phoebe Norton For themselves	<p>Thank you Madam Chair and members of the Committee.</p> <p>My name is Phoebe Norton. I am representing myself. When I was a freshman in college and home on break, my parents had been called to pick up my older sister from Cleveland where she was trying to work</p>

	<p>but wandering on the streets. When I arrived at our small town, she had sequestered herself in a bedroom. Since, we were close, I went to talk with her. She cautiously let me in but I couldn't understand anything she was saying and she seemed very mentally ill. We managed to get her in the car and my parents drove to admit her to a psychiatric hospital in Columbus. After waiting at the hospital all day, my parents came home. I asked my mother, "What did they say?" She responded through tears, "They wouldn't talk to us." Senators, that was over 60 years ago but similar scenes are frequently happening now all over Colorado. This bill will help providers give families the support they need, within HIPPA privacy guidelines, to take care of their loved ones at home and reduce the need for expensive, State funded institutions.</p>
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Hello, my name is Mary Patrick and I am representing myself.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of **HB24-1217 Sharing of Patient Health-Care Information**.

I am writing to testify because I have a loved one with mental illness. He had three admissions to mental health hospitals in high school and family was able to consult with the doctors. But when he turned age 18, suddenly we were not even able to know where he was.

Please imagine your child is missing -- and may be suicidal -- and you call the hospitals and they say they cannot even tell you if he is there. All you can do is tell the staff, "If he is there, please tell him his family is very worried about him. Please ask him to let you call family and let them know you are okay."

You sit there realizing that while the magic age of 18 has hit, and your child is an adult by law; he is still very much a child. You know your child does not know how to speak-up for himself. He can't relate his medical or mental health history; he doesn't know the names of his medications; he doesn't remember his doctor's name; he does not know or understand what is wrong with him. He knows or cares nothing about the paperwork he is signing. A person with mental illness may not even speak. He may not be in a mental state to say who to call.

You call every hospital you can think of. You think - is he even in a hospital; has he done something to himself? Where is he? "You have this slide show in your brain of all these horrible things happening to your baby."

There are so many things the doctors should know about him. What if they give him a medicine that he is allergic to, or interacts with the medicines he is taking? They need to know which meds work and which don't -- or that he may not be taking them at all. They need to know his neurological symptoms and heart symptoms; his housing situation and what happens at home; that he doesn't have a therapist despite 8 hospitalizations in 6 years (or that he finally has a therapist and who that is). Providers need to know he has been mis-diagnosed before and any new symptoms he has. He was given over 32 ECT treatments which didn't help and may have made things worse. He can't tell them because he doesn't remember. Will they recognize he is neurodiverse, or has a neurological condition, or a personality disorder?

If you cannot talk to the providers, you cannot tell them about his suicidal ideation or self-harm, about his struggles with reality and relationships.

There is so much the doctors and therapists need to know but all you can do is sit there and hope someone will call and let you know that he is safe and ask you his story. The waiting and

not being able to help is heartbreaking. We have gone through this 6 times and he still does not have a proper diagnosis.

Providers need to be given information so they can protect their staff, other patients, and the patient himself. Families can inform providers about a patient's potential triggers, things that could increase suicidal thoughts, that they are not violent but do have military or martial arts training, if the patient is prone to outbursts, and about phobias and fears. Properly informed staff can safely prevent or de-escalate reactions of patients in altered mental states. The more information a provider has, the safer everyone will be and the more successful the treatment will be.

Our medical records systems only tell the providers what a patient tells them. In the case of mental health, there may be little information and it may be very skewed. It is never the full picture and providers are often working blind. Providers need information the patient may not be able or willing to give about himself. Family input is critical to putting together the pieces of the puzzle.

This bill will create a Friends and Family Input Form which will allow an individual to provide treating professionals and facilities with protected information related to a patient receiving mental health or substance use services. This may include information about a patient's diagnoses, past hospitalizations, de-escalation techniques, current and past provider information, potential triggers, housing status, family situation, current medical conditions, current and past medications, and other important information. That information will help providers better understand the patient and may even save a patient's life.

I urge you to vote **YES** on **HB24-1217 Sharing of Patient Health-Care Information**.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story. I would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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Fort Collins, Colorado

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