



Brianda Negrete *Public Comment - Behavioral*

From: e onja brown lawson <catapultartists@gmail.com> *Wellness*
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2023 11:02 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Health and Human Services, Behavioral Wellness Budget
Attachments: BOS Ltr Re- TRS 4.19.23.pdf

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

TO: Joan Hartman, Laura Capps, Das Williams, Steve Lavagnino, and Bob Nelson

April 19, 2023

To: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

From: E. onja Brown Lawson

Re: **Beds NOT Cells and
Treatment Resistance Schizophrenia (TRS)**

My name is E. onja Brown. I have lived in Santa Barbara County for 36 years, and my 4 children attended school here. I hope that Linda's experience, which I read at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, as well as the stories of all of the families that spoke, will result in measures that provide needed beds in our community. If not our loved ones will continue to be incarcerated, made houseless or sent off to far places and continue extreme hardships for them and their families.

Due to time constraint I didn't get to clearly state my concern about Treatment Resistance Schizophrenia (TRS). Dr. Kenneth Duckworth, was the speaker at the NAMI meeting at the Mental Wellness Center this past December. Dr. Duckworth is the Chief Medical Officer for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and a professor at Harvard University. His recent publication is "You Are Not Alone". Though the title is encouraging, most families with loved ones that have mental illness often feel they **are** alone in the struggle to get appropriate treatment. He states that about 25% of those with schizophrenia do NOT respond fully to normally prescribed anti-psychotic medication. (Other medical articles place the percentages 30%-40%) People with TRS continue to experience paranoia, hallucinations and delusions, despite being on prescribed antipsychotic medication. However, TRS doesn't mean that the situation is hopeless.

It is imperative that Behavioral Wellness give attention to those with Treatment Resistance Schizophrenia -TRS, and develop a protocol for diagnosing and treatment.

For the past 18 years or more. I have expressed concern both in writing and verbally about the fact that the prescribed medication was not effective for my 38 year old son. No one -not staff, nor physician, nor case worker or anyone that I've shared my concerns with, had ever given credence to my concern. So you can imagine the excitement I felt, upon reading about TRS, in Dr. Duckworth's book.

I urge you to support and encourage Behavioral Wellness to seek out not only more beds, but also treatment and recognition that a large percentage of those being treated need other options in terms of medication and support. Currently the only federally authorized medication is Clozapine. But it has very serious side effects for some, so I understand the reluctance in prescribing it. But there are new medications on the market and perhaps more effective for some individuals.

Other options should be explored by healthcare providers, rather than continuing to prescribe the same medication for years. It's a waste of time and money, not to mention the stress on the body for those that are prescribed bi weekly injectable medication, because of refusal to take oral meds. In the meantime, the client continues to be miserable with suicidal thoughts, annoying voices, paranoia and feeling that life is a drudgery and not worth living. Further, if it is a person of color, there are even more societal concerns.

With the new monies, some of it should be earmarked for exploring options for those that are not benefiting from the meds they are taking. New medication's new protocols and new discoveries are taking place every day. Be Well can utilize that information and make it applicable to the our loved ones that aren't responding to routine medication

"it's embracing the chaos that we find the courage to transform"
...quote shared by Toni Navarro, Behavioral Wellness, Director, Behavioral Wellness, Santa Barbara County