

Alexander, Jacquelyne

From: Lee McCoy <lee.a.mccoy@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2016 5:49 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Support Laura's Law pilot project

Hello,

I am the father of an adult daughter with schizophrenia. Her road has been long and hard, and her treatment was delayed for years during the time she was resistant to treatment. It wasn't until she finally committed a crime that we could force treatment on her and she got better.

I think the pilot project is a good idea. Those of us who have been through this know that court-ordered treatment is often the only way to break the cycle of stabilization/destabilization that we too often see.

Lee McCoy

Alexander, Jacquelyne

From: Rose Van Schaik <roseshouses@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 09, 2016 10:42 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Implement Laura's Law-Public comment

Honorable Supervisors,

> As a member of Families ACT, I hope to be of service to individuals and families in our community who are struggling with the consequences of untreated mental health conditions, by sharing a very personal story which illustrates why we need to implement Laura's Law in Santa Barbara County.

> My son graduated from the University at 25. Shortly after he received his graduated degree he was diagnosed with a serious mental disorder. He has endured terrible suffering living on the streets of Santa Barbara for several years with his mental illness.

> He has been in and out of jail and the PHF unit and was repeatedly released with no exit plan. At one point he was arrested while he was meditating in a stranger's home and the police K-9 ripped his arm open. They stapled his wound shut while he was in custody. His arm has a huge scar now and reminds him everyday of that terrible time.

> He recently stood up for someone in a public area and was arrested and thrown in an isolation cell in the Santa Barbara County Jail for two weeks. My son has never hurt anyone. After he was released, he did not understand that he needed to show up in court for his hearing and only thanks to a complex intervention that a warrant was not issued for his arrest.

> No one in our community should have to go through this. This is why we need Laura's law.

Rosa Loupias



COALITION AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

A Santa Barbara County Coalition

May 10, 2016,

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

I am Toni Wellen, Chair of the Coalition Against Gun Violence, which is supportive of adopting Laura's Law in Santa Barbara County. Like all of you, our primary concern is safety for individuals who are severely mentally ill and for the community.

The current approach, making the intensive services of the Assertive Community Treatment plan available to the most ill, would show that the court component of Laura's Law is unnecessary. Unfortunately, time has shown that this approach has failed to live up to expectations. This is consistent with studies showing that the court component of ACT is necessary for its success. Additionally the number of actual clients will be very small, and some of them will have housing while others will very likely get SSI, so the cost of housing should not be the primary reason for voting against implementation. Laura's Law is not a new service: it enhances and gives added strength to existing programs.

I am also speaking as a CA licensed family therapist, a profession whose caveat, like all medical and mental health professionals, is DO NO HARM. We need Laura's Law to stop the revolving door, where the chronically mentally ill bounce from the street to the jail to the hospital, never getting better. They may go off medication, become dangerous and just continue revolving through the court and mental hospital doors.

It is no longer viable to say that funding is the reason not to proceed. The well-being of severe mental people and the safety of the community must be the priority. It is incorrect to claim that the costs associated with ACT implementation cannot reduce or replace voluntary programs. The California legislature clarified that counties can use funding from Proposition 63 – the Mental Health Services Act – to implement Laura's Law. Other people, more knowledgeable about the financial aspects will elucidate concerning that a portion of the MHSA surplus is coming back to Santa Barbara County this year. Additionally, as to predicting costs, of course there are no comparable counties, each California county is unique.

The current strategy has fallen short that is why we are here. We need to stop incurring county costs for ER visits, law enforcement, jail and court time. Families generally support LL as it enables their loved one to live in the community and receive treatment. Once stabilized, a larger percentage of these folks elect to enter treatment voluntarily. We must give family members of adults with severely untreated mental illness a new strategy and that is to adopt Laura's Law.

Respectfully,

Toni Wellen, Chair

Coalition Against Gun Violence

Honorable Supervisors,

My son, Michael, is one of the persons who would benefit from Laura's Law. Laura's Law might save his life. My son is really ill. For fourteen years, he has cycled between the street, the hospitals, and the jail. Right now, he is on the street in Santa Barbara. He is in very bad shape. Our family is afraid. Michael is a county mental health client, and he is gravely disabled, but I can't even get him an assessment now for a 5150. Our family sees him on the street, and there's nothing we can do.

I was told "Just wait until Michael gets arrested and then he will get the help he needs." But, he didn't. Three times he was taken by county mental health down to East LA and dropped at a sober living home near skid row. Each time he left, and I had to go down there every day after work and walk through skid row after dark until I could find him and bring him back to Santa Barbara. Then, sometimes he would be put in a sober living home in Santa Barbara, and then he would leave again. The last time he was in the jail, he had a good lawyer, and he got to go to the new Crisis Residential when he was discharged. He left that night.

With Laura's Law, people would keep reaching out to Michael to give him the treatment and support he needs. He's done well a couple of times in treatment, but he can't do it on his own. He is too sick. He needs Laura's Law. Please adopt Laura's Law today for my son.

Linda Orozco



Alexander, Jacquelyne

From: CamilleGilbert@aol.com
Sent: Monday, May 09, 2016 7:15 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Adopt Laura's Law, help our homeless mentally ill.

To the Clerk of the Board:

I am in total agreement with Families Act's position on Laura's Law, and with the statement they have given the Board of Supervisors.

Just today when I was downtown there was a homeless woman in her 50s, 60s, hard to tell, thin, unkempt, with a shopping cart, talking to herself, cursing and yelling, oblivious to her surroundings. It broke my heart. She is definitely a candidate for Laura's Law.

We have a responsibility to those who cannot make good decisions for their own welfare and safety because of mental illness. We need to help them get off the streets, which only exasperates their symptoms. They are exposed to constant noise, nutritional lack, no place to rest and sleep, confusion, temperature extremes, lack of protection.

I have a friend who is both mentally unstable and an alcoholic. No one is attending to his mental condition. He denies it and continually goes through the revolving door between jail and the streets. He needs intensive residential treatment.

Laura's Law gives us a way to change this travesty. Let's implement the pilot project so that our county will be eligible to apply this June for a SAMHA grant, which could fund the project.

Sincerely,

Camille Gilbert
Santa Barbara, CA

Alexander, Jacquelyne

From: David Moore <dnmj@mac.com>
Sent: Monday, May 09, 2016 5:46 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Public Comment

Honorable Supervisors,

Our city is admired around the world.

Sadly, however and as you are well aware, our Behavior Wellness department sorely needs resources to reach out to Santa Barbara residents with severe and debilitating mental health conditions who are unable to reach out for help. I truly hope you will implement a Pilot Project based on Laura's Law.

In my volunteer work at the Santa Barbara Rescue Mission I come in contact weekly with men who desperately need someone to patiently, lovingly and kindly gain their trust and engage them in the kind of treatment that will help them recover their health. As a pastor and citizen I routinely encounter people who would appreciate advocacy.

It is extremely painful to see our fellow brothers and sisters fall through our current system's cracks. Men and women still live on our streets year in and year out lost in their own world and living in inhumane conditions.

Assisted Outpatient Treatment works. We have seen the benefits it has brought to residents in other counties and the savings when people caught in the "revolving door" of repeated incarceration and periods of homeless finally begin to receive the help they need to live life above the fault line of despair.

This is just one way we can begin help those who need it and begin to show the nation how it's done. We lead in so many ways, and we should not lag when it comes to this.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. David Moore
New Covenant Church, Santa Barbara