

Brianda Negrete

Public Comment - Behavioral Wellness



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Thank you Brianda, for letting me know that the attachment wan not send
 Have a wonderful afternoo. Isabel Navan

 Isabel Nava Public Comment April 2023.docx



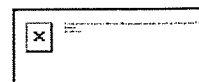
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To: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
Date April 16, 2023
Subject: Beds Not Cells
From Isabel Nava

My name is Isabel Nava. I have been a resident of Santa Barbara since 1966. I have been involved with Families ACT! on and off for approximately nine years. I am reaching out to you, the County Board of Supervisors, because I hear that you are in charge of the County's General Fund budget. I want the County Supervisors to know that we desperately need more acute psychiatric beds available to our loved ones with mental health conditions who are in a mental health crisis.

My grandson Anthony Padilla suffered from severe anxiety and depression, PTSD, and ADHD. He had many health problems and knew that he was an unwanted child. In August 2015 Anthony was admitted to Patton State Mental Hospital to be restored to competence, and he was there for three months. We became very, very close and with my support, he did well for a number of years.

In the Fall of 2020, however, during a stressful period of transition in his living situation, Anthony's mental health began to deteriorate and he found himself in a mental health crisis. He went to the ER at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital, trying to get help. He was having anxiety attacks, he was hallucinating; he was hearing voices telling him to hurt himself. He was having suicidal thoughts. He called me from the hospital when he was in great anguish. He kept telling me, "I don't want to hurt myself, Grandma." I told him to speak louder, but I was not able to hear him. I told him that so the nurses could hear him. They finally did hear him! How many times does a person in a serious mental health crisis have to go to the ER to get help?

Anthony was admitted to the ER five times between October 3rd and October 10th, 2020. He was there on October 03, 05, and 06. On October 09, he was transferred to the Crisis Stabilization Unit at Camino del Remedio. On October 10, I called the Crisis Stabilization Unit, to see if my grandson was going to get the proper help. I was told by the person that answered the phone that Anthony was just staying one day, to be evaluated. On October 10 Anthony was again transferred to the ER at the cottage hospital. My question was, what kind of place is the Crisis Stabilization unit? They were clearly not qualified to care for him when he was having an anxiety attack. Shortly after he was sent there, Anthony texted me, letting me know that he was back at the ER.

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On October 14th, my grandson took his own life.

I will never know what he was feeling. He was crying for help from the organization that promised they would be there for him. I will never be able to hold him to let him know that he was my sunshine, my reason to live. And it is not because I failed him. Santa Barbara County --and its lack of quality mental health care --did. If the County

Behavioral Wellness Department --and Cottage Hospital-- had done their job, Anthony would still be alive.

It is imperative that the County Supervisor makes the necessary changes for the community. We need more acute psychiatric beds available to our loved ones with mental health conditions. We cannot make the same mistake again.

I decided that Anthony's death would make a difference in Santa Barbara County -- that the neglect and incompetence he experienced would not happen to another person's family member. The county must act now in the face of such a pervasive mental health crisis or we will continue to lose valuable members of our community like Anthony.

We, the families of young adults with mental health conditions, come to you today in hopes that you will pledge to create treatment beds—hundreds of treatment beds—and not jail cells, for our precious loved ones.