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State of Rhode Island  
House Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island General Assembly  
Providence, RI

**RE: ELEANOR SLATER HOSPITAL BILLING AND COMPLIANCE ISSUES**

Dear Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance:

I am writing to you as the cousin of a resident of Eleanor Slater Hospital. Sadly she is now over 50 years of age and needs the level of care provided at ESH. She has a large supportive and loving family who have advocated her for years and years. She has been placed in probably at least 16 different places over the years by the RI mental health system. Now the family believes there really is not a suitable alternative for her which will meet her needs, keep her safe, and most of all be a stable long term home for her.

I am aware of the very serious issues now in our world, and the real financial issues facing the State of Rhode Island. But still I am writing to urge you to provide adequate funding and best practices level of care for the seriously and persistently mentally ill who cannot tell you directly of their needs and suffering.

My comments in this letter do not directly address the \$20,000,000 funding issue from last year or other compliance issues.

This is to remind you that persons like my cousin need your protection and care. She is a member of perhaps our most vulnerable population here in Rhode Island. My extended family is really dependent on the varying and inconsistent services provided by Rhode Island to care for her and to keep her safe. Needless to say the care has been inconsistent and far from stable over the years, despite the never ending efforts of family love and advocacy. And at times in the past was quite good and helpful. But not in recent years.

You must remember THERE IS NOWHERE ELSE FOR HER TO LIVE. Persons with serious and persistent mental illness are discharged from hospitals and nursing home TO HOMELESS SHELTERS. This is a real need which only the state budget can really address in any meaningful way. This does not happen to someone with a heart condition or cancer.

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As a member of the NAMI RI Board and Chair of our Advocacy Committee, I have had the opportunity to meet with some of you in smaller meetings. Also I was able to participate in a round table held by the governor to learn more about mental health issues. Each time I am in such a meeting I bring up the need to maintain and expand ESH and mention my cousin's situation (with the permission of her family). I do this because no one who lives there can do so. And because it is important for each of you to remember this need when making budget decision. I am writing this letter in my individual capacity and family member.

You must remember THERE IS NOWHERE ELSE for many persons now living at ESH. Others should be receiving the protection and security of living there but instead are on the street, in prison, or already dead. For example, this problem is intrinsically connected with the large number of ACI residents who have serious and persistent mental illness but are in prison instead of in treatment. This is a costly mistake.

I thank you for your attention to this vital need and ask you to consider this reality when making your budget decision. I realize those decisions are very very hard this year, but remember providing the proper level of care can save funds in the long term. And it will also save lives.

Yours truly,

Marcia J. Boyd

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