

September 2, 2020

Hello,

My name is Charles Sylvester and I am 48 years old. I was born with Spina Bifida. I have no feeling from the waist down and am confined to a wheelchair. I have lived on my own in the community in the past and did well until recently. It was in the community where I became depressed related to so many factors around my disability and environment at that time. I became isolated and had difficulty taking care of myself. It was when I could no longer manage a pressure ulcer on my skin that I needed more care. When my insurance would not pay for daily wound care at home, and my mental and physical health continued to decline, I was admitted to Eleanor Slater Hospital, Zambarano Unit.

I believe I need to stay at Eleanor Slater Hospital longer than what may be considered for many reasons. I was told that because I am doing better physically, I may be asked to leave and be discharged sooner than I am ready, to a nursing home. I am currently on several waiting lists for community housing. I have worked hard this past year to make the progress that I've made and still have more work to do here. If I was to get discharged now and even worse, go to a nursing home at 48 years old, everything that I've accomplished would be for nothing. I think this because a nursing home would not and could not provide all the services that I receive and need here.

I participate in every part of rehabilitation they have to offer here for me. This includes both physically, mentally and socially. I have a unique story because I was here at Eleanor Slater Hospital as a newborn. This state hospital served my needs then as a child and has again, helped to serve my needs as an adult. This is the truth. What would happen to people like me if this place was not around? In the community, insurance disappoints many people like me.

It is always said that resources will be available, but I have lived knowing that they are not. This hospital has reshaped who I am, and I am forever grateful! I now have a purpose for living and knowing that despite my physical challenges, I can and will do great things! The care here is better than I could have ever imagined. Since I do not have a family speaking for me, I want to advocate for myself. Although I will not be at Eleanor Slater Hospital forever, I realize that a hospital like this is needed for people who have nowhere else to go. The staff here is wonderful and works hard to get people like me back into the community. For those that cannot do the same, I want to be a voice for them. They need a place like this.

I want to ask that you please be my voice when making decisions. Know that I am a person that wants to reach my goals. Please protect my place at Eleanor Slater Hospital for as long as I need to be here. Thank you for reading this and even now, I am reaching my goals by writing and typing this myself!

Sincerely,

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