

2-16-2011

RE: Opposition to Senate bill 597 allowing Psychologists the right to prescribe medicine.

Thank you Chair Dr. Josh Green and Health Committee Members, for allowing me to testify.

My name is Pauline Arellano; I am not a doctor, nor a Psychologist nor a representative of the Pharmaceutical Companies. I am a Board member of the Hawaii Disabilities Rights Center; I was a past Chair of the Protection and Advocacy for the Mentally Ill. I am a member of NAMI; I was appointed by the Dept of Justice to be on The Patient Protection committee at the Hawaii State Hospital and served on a similar committee at Kahi Mohala. I speak for none of these very fine organizations I come to you today only as a mother.

So there is no misunderstanding please know that the right medicines and the right dosages work miracles.

I am here today to help you understand what happens when these very powerful medicines don't work the way they were intended.

My daughter was diagnosed as Bi-Polar. Prior to this diagnosis my home was a war zone. No one understood what was going on with her; it negatively affected the entire family. There was screaming and yelling at all hours, I would get beaten by her. The police were at our home so often that I knew them all by name. She would run away and get herself into all kinds of trouble I was certain we were headed to the Criminal Justice system.

I could never imagine the day that I would prefer what I just described to you over what happened next.

The DOCTOR prescribed Lithium and Prozac. After only 8 days on these medicines that were given to her exactly as prescribed by her doctor SHE WAS A VEGETABLE. She had what was diagnosed as Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome. She was stiff, she couldn't feed or dress herself, she couldn't talk, she couldn't walk, couldn't bathe or toilet herself. How could this possibly happen we took her to the Doctor he gave her medicines? It was a NIGHTMARE I would not wish on any other family. Let me describe what our home was like afterwards. It would take two of us to get her up dressed and cleaned in the morning. It took three of us to feed her liquid food the medicines made her tongue curl up in the back of her throat, one person would use a tongue depressor to hold her tongue flat, another would pry her mouth open the other would spoon liquid food into her mouth. It was a team effort that kept her alive. I begged them to put a feeding tube in her because she was disintegrating right before our eyes, they refused they offered to put a tube through her nose which she would have yanked out. After days of being elated that she was finally getting nutrition we had another problem nothing in her system was working and she needed help getting the food out, I won't detail what that ensued but it was not a pleasant task for anyone. She would then get intensive physical therapy a wonderful woman from Sri Lanka taught me how to massage every muscle group in the body, from the ear lobes to finger and toe joints, hips elbows etc. I would crank up the music real loud and get to work on her so her body

wouldn't atrophy. She got better one inch at a time. Anyone visiting our family during this time would have thought we were nuts, I cried to see my adult daughter worm herself on the floor like an infant does before it walks because that meant there was movement. She couldn't even hold her head up because there was no muscle control. We went to the beach and made our own sand bags to keep her head up. By the grace of God she got better one day and one inch at a time. Many do not. Before this committee makes any decision on this matter please visit the psychiatric wards, you will see those that are not as lucky as our family. People who will never again walk or talk, people whose eyeballs roll around uncontrollably, or arms jerk around, because of the medicines. Far too many have died because of the medicines prescribed to them by Doctors. Our family will never be the same because of these medicines. All of our hopes and dreams for our family died that day. My daughter still needs 24 hour supervision; she will never be able to have children so no grandchildren. I am not able to work because of the care she needs, our lives were changed forever because of medicines. Please really think about the repercussions your decisions will have not only on the patient but the families involved. Should you have the time go to one of Dr. Shintani's Seminars he will tell you the 4th leading cause of Death is Medicines.

Right here in our city an inmate was medicated to death, those giving him these very powerful medicines didn't recognize that drooling and stumbling were obvious signs of overmedication they did nothing and the young man DIED.

There are many good things this Committee could do, right now there is a serious shortage of Psychiatric beds in our State because treating Psychiatric illnesses does not make money for the Hospitals. When I tried to get help professional help for my daughter earlier this year because her illnesses was again getting out of control we were denied services at Queens, they had no room, there or at Kahi or at Castle, their advice was when she comes back escorted by the police we'll make room. How outrageous is that you're making criminals out of the sick. When you know that the right medicines in the right dosages works wonders.

May I strongly suggest that the Psychologists who today want to prescribe medicines go back to school and get a Masters Degree in Nursing or take the necessary courses to be a Doctor. Please do not allow these very powerful, potent live saving or life destroying medicines to be prescribed by Psychologists.

Thank you,