

Williams, Don A.

From: Tina Peterson [tinapeterson@nuhsbaum.com]
Sent: Wednesday, August 08, 2012 3:49 PM
To: Williams, Don A.
Subject: Public comment on closing of Singer Mental Health Center 12-060

Hello, Mr. Williams:

The closure of the Singer Mental Health Center in Rockford, along with the closure of community based Family Services Behavioral Health Center in McHenry County, will leave many of our citizens struggling with mental health without necessary medical help. Not only is this detrimental to the health and well-being of the ill, it can be a danger to the public at large. Gerald Loughner and James Holmes are not unique to the west. McHenry County has experienced many, many tragedies in the recent past due to failures in the local and state mental health care system. Among them are:

July 21, 2004, Lawrence Hucksteadt, 41, a person with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, douses a receptionist at his mental health clinic with gas and lights her on fire. 69 year old Ellen Polivka dies 6 weeks later of her injuries.

March 5, 2010, James Trzcinski, 51, a person with schizophrenia since the age of 16, stabs his 80 year old mom, Dorothy Trzcinski to death.

February 8, 2010, David Szalonek. 16, a person with aspergers syndrome and major depression, shoots his father to death with a shotgun (Brian Szalonek, 51).

February 11, 2010, Martin Green, 26, a person with bipolar disorder beats his step-mom, Patricia L. McNamara, 51 to death with a hammer.

November 17, 2011, Raymond Davis, 22, stabs his mom, Carol Schritz, 58 to death.

These stories do not include the suicide attempts, the lady who stabbed a little baby in the eye, the mother who wrapped her newborn in a garbage bag and stuffed her under the sink, the people who broke the law (including my nephew) for lesser crimes and are now sitting in prison.

Most of these families had had orders of protection sworn out against their children, but relented and let them come back because there was nowhere else for them to go. These families paid the ultimate sacrifice and did their best to help their loved ones, but they were not capable of controlling a violent, insane, mentally ill person. One has to wonder what the outcome would have been had their loved ones been allowed to wander the streets. There needs to be more chronic beds available to those with the most serious illness.

Our state has enough money to give multimillion dollars in tax breaks to profitable corporations to "sway" them to stay in Illinois. We have money for all sorts of things. However, we have chosen to shirk our responsibilities toward those who are weaker, sicker and unable to fend for themselves. It is also the state's responsibility to protect the public at large. We need to do better. We must do better. Please, please, find a way to fund mental health care in Illinois in a way that is responsible.

Thank you,

Tina Peterson