

Denise Bleuel  
Public Comment for Little Hoover Commission  
May 26, 2016

My name is Denise Bleuel and I live in Napa. I am a retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker with 35 years of working in the field. Most of all, I am a Mother of two sons. My eldest son, Quoyah Carson Tehee, committed suicide December 10th at the age of 37, by hanging in Sonoma County. He suffered greatly from Schizoaffective Disorder. Before he took his life he had been missing for four months. It was agonizing not being able to find him. When he surfaced he began to commit petty offenses, a result of his decompensating mental illness. I tried and tried and tried to get him hospitalized and to obtain other services for him, to no avail. I know the Mental Health system well and despite me calling many resources NO ONE would help. It is pathetic to hope that your loved one would be incarcerated for their safety. My grief is agonizing and I miss the quiet, sensitive, creative, intelligent and loving son Quoyah was to me. I silently scream in frustration at the System for not providing treatment for Quoyah. He was not able to recognize how sick he was. But guess what? WE are the System. WE need to treat psychiatric disorders equally to any other medical illnesses because they are diseases of the brain. WE need to be assured that a good portion of each countys' budget treat the mentally ill, and that the counties are accountable as to how the monies are spent and how much money is available. This should be transparent. These funds should be allocated for the most vulnerable citizens and not saved for the "rainy days" fund. These ARE "rainy days" and this IS an emergency. I, personally, and many other families and professionals, have not seen an improvement or availability of care in the past several years. In fact, the treatment needed has either not been accessible or is completely nonexistent. It is too late to save Quoyah but it is not too late to save the lives of others who suffer from severe forms of mental illness.

Thank you for your support, Denise Bleuel