

RE: LD 674     An Act To Support Early Intervention and Treatment of Psychotic Disorders

**Please accept the following as testimony in support of LD 674:**

Just two days ago, March 20<sup>th</sup> 2021, I received this text: ***“30 years ago TODAY. Thank you for helping me through.”*** This came from a dear friend of mine who often gives me credit for saving his life on that day.

It was spring break our Senior year in college and we were in Key West Florida. That day, for the first time in his life, Nathaniel experienced a major psychotic break. Undiagnosed, bi-polar disorder reared its ugly head with a manic episode and major paranoid delusions that probably should have hospitalized him on the spot. Not sure what to do we just took refuge that night and starting the next day, given he wasn't expressing suicidal ideations, I was able to gently guide us the entire drive back up the coast to Hamilton College in upstate New York where his parents were waiting to help. He ended up spending a month in MacLaine Hospital interrupting school and a timely graduation that spring.

Fortunately, however, what he received in exchange was phenomenal early intervention care – coordinated services that covered all levels of care and worked with his family effectively to insure a smooth transition back into the world. Two months after his discharge Nathaniel was able to wrap up his school work and secure his degree. Now, 30 years later, Nathaniel has a beautiful wife Naoko, two adorable children, and he makes roughly 250k a year as the internet marketing director for a major company in California. All I can say is thank God he got the quality coordinated care he needed when he needed it most. I think it made all the difference.

That event is also largely responsible for my choosing a career in human services and psychotherapy which started the very year Nathaniel had his psychotic break, and continues on. To this day I use Nathaniel's example of what can happen when a young person gets the right care at the right time and with the right level of support to pull it all together.

It is common knowledge in the field that early intervention for psychotic disorders is associated with greatly reduced pathology, increased resiliency features, and better overall long-term outcomes. Lack of such care is when such illness is most likely to lead to homelessness, suicide, and long-term total dependence. The right combination of services also affords tremendous benefits to schools, the legal system, and to the family as they try to support the highest level of functioning possible.

Let me say that realizing your child has a psychotic disorder or one with psychotic features is an absolutely mind-blowing heart wrenching experience for a parent. It is incredibly frightening and fraught with uncertainty which drives parent's anxiety sky high. It is MUCH worse for the one discovering he has such a disorder who is left to question all they once believed. To receive solid comprehensive care at this time offers those who are suffering a solid chance at a healthy productive life. Having patchy care with gaps undermines reduces the benefit of the quality care they may be getting. Putting the right package of supports in place makes the most of all the services thereby breathing life into one's hope for a good future.

**Please Support LD 674:     An Act To Support Early Intervention and Treatment of Psychotic Disorders**

Respectfully Submitted,

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