



19 October 2021

I/DD Waiting List Interim Legislative Committee:

I write to advocate for those in crisis.

Many in crisis have no voice. Their lives have been and continue to be diced up and passed along. Broken systems pushing broken people down the road. Where are they to go?

They need help, they need a voice.

This past month, in my rural area, two individuals have come into crisis.

One, a young man, just 18, committed to Osawatomie State Hospital just over a month ago because he acted out violently against his step-father. He has grown up in an environment of alleged neglect and abuse. Last week his mother overdosed and died. The police will escort him to her funeral on Friday. Home and community based services are ideal for this man, institutionalized care is far above his needed supports. Law enforcement and courts do what they can. It should not have come to this.

Another, a nearly 60-year-old man, was born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. His mother must have lived her entire life in denial, as she never looked into getting him services, not even Medicaid. She recently died, leaving him close to homelessness, completely broke, and with a hoarded apartment. He has a sister, with her own family, who lives in Johnson County. His sister works full time, including over-time and long shifts. She has worked with him on getting services since their mother's passing, filling out paperwork, helping him understand a system that she doesn't understand, buying his medications, scheduling appointments to get his neglected medical care up-to-date, trying to work with the apartment manager that wants to evict him. She emailed me just two days ago saying she needs to take a step back. It has been too much for her. She has done more than many have done in her place. It should not have come to this.

This has been in one month in my position in a rural area. Emailing CDDOs across the state to see if any of their providers have any openings (all of mine are at capacity), trying to gather documentation (which sometimes doesn't exist), reaching out to other social services that don't always understand my system and how it works together, listening to people tell their story, and crying.

Our system needs help. We need help. We cannot continue to live in our communities this way.

Sincerely,

Robin Griffin-Lohman

CDDO Director

Tri-Ko, Inc.

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