

Paul's Legacy Project



Equal Access to Long-Term In-Patient Treatments Because Mental Illness is a Medical Illness

My name is Paul Flannery, and I was one of the 4% of US adults with severe mental illness. We do not seem to have a voice in this whole "Occupy" movement. The call to save Medicaid funding once again leaves my fellow 4% out in the cold. For some, that is a literal statement.

You see, Medicaid funding for long-term, in-patient treatments is denied to Medicaid eligible adults who are unlucky enough, like I was, to have an illness in their brain, instead of their heart, or lung or some other organ in their body. There is even a law against us, it is called the Medicaid Institutes for Mental Diseases (IMD) Exclusion.

Because people with severe brain disorders, like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, are denied access to appropriate long-term, in-patient treatments, 200,000 of us are homeless, 500,000 of us are in prison, we cycle in and out of the local emergency rooms, psych wards, and jails by the millions, and we die, on average, 25 years sooner than you, the other 96%, due to medical neglect. You traded state hospitals for homelessness, incarceration, and death. This is not protecting our civil liberties.

I died three years ago; I was only 48 years old. You could be my voice, and the voice of the 4%. Please tell Congress to repeal the discriminatory Medicaid law that puts long-term, in-patient treatments out of our reach. It is literally killing us.

Repeal the Medicaid Institutes for Mental Diseases (IMD) Exclusion