

Good afternoon:

My name is Daniel Duane Spyker.

I am receiving mental health services at Detroit Central City Community Mental Health. Since February of 2012 I have been a member of the Board of Detroit Central City Community Mental Health (DCCCMH).

Since March of 2012 I have been participating in activities of the Inner City Clubhouse. In May of 2013 I was elected to the Community Planning Council (CPC) of the Detroit Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency (Authority).(DWCCMHA)

I am also an associate member of the Consumer Family Advocacy Council (CFAC) of the DWCCMHA.

I work on issues of public transportation and other issues of "Access" in subcommittees of CPC and CFAC.

What "Access" means is the ability and opportunity for the constituencies we represent to receive service from the mental health agencies of Detroit and Wayne County. We look at the barriers which make it difficult for people to receive services; some of those barriers being in housing, education, and public transportation.

I have been the lead person on transportation issues on the Access subcommittee of the CPC. And I also have responsibilities as do all other committee members, to look at less tangible but equally as obvious barriers to persons receiving services and which also impede efforts of constituents for recovery and wholeness. These barriers include the unwholesome stigma that is still carried by many persons receiving or seeking to receive mental health services. Another less tangible barrier is the lack of advocacy. Mental health services and the people who use them are hardly a priority in most legislatures, councils, and agencies.

I commend members of this committee for being here. It proves that the governor, lieutenant governor, and state legislators are serious in their consideration of what policies are best for the people who need mental health care services. And what is best for the people of the State of Michigan.

I am going to ask you, members of this committee the same questions that I as a member of the Access subcommittee of the CPC asked of the new governing board of the Detroit Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency..

First question: Who is going to name and what terms are going to be used for people who use mental health services in the State of Michigan? One issue that has come up locally is the use of the word "consumer" to describe those who are using mental health services. To describe someone as a "consumer" implies passivity and a lack of participation and engagement on the part of those so labeled.. We do not want to be known as "consumers". We are dynamic, engaged and full participants in our striving toward health and wholeness, "shalom" if you will.

Second question: Transportation! Only about 3% of people who use mental health services in this city and county have access to their own car. Adequate public transportation is decisive in how effectively people can receive treatment, further their education, and find and keep jobs. To quote the new executive director of the DWCCMHA, Tom Watkins when he answered this same question: "When you can't get anywhere you can't get anything done!"

Finally those of us who are stakeholders in Community Mental Health (and actually that is all of us) even though we are own advocates individually and collectively, we need from you something more, something akin to that of a "goel" that relative in ancient Israel whose duty was to set things right. The State of Michigan can be our "Goel" who sees that things are made right. If things are made right, we will have that "wholeness" that "shalom" which is the goal of Community Mental Health!

Submitted by

Daniel Duane Spyker
4501 Cicotte
Detroit, MI 48210-2461
(313) 549-1250
Daniel31418@yahoo.com