

Dear Rep. Les Gara,

November 30, 2007

You, among others, have raised the debate about limiting weapons to individuals with a psychiatric disorder.

We would ask that you would consider an issue that has bearing on the debate.

Both Seung-Hui Cho, who killed 32 people at Virginia Tech. and Leland Chasteen, 22, who is now being held at the Anchorage jail on two counts each of first degree attempted murder and first degree assault share commonalities.

Both individuals were placed in an acute care psychiatric facility for stabilization and evaluation.

Individuals placed in acute care psychiatric facilities are often given massive amounts of psychotropic drugs, often in cocktails (mixtures). The 2 largest problems are that a lot of those drugs come with warnings that they can create as many problems as they cure. (Which means that they should be used in a minimum amount as necessary.)

Putting the above issue aside, where society failed is that they placed two individuals in an acute care facility, gave them large amounts of drugs, claimed they were stabilized and pushed them out the door with a prescription in their pocket. The patient is faced with 2 problems. The patient not only faces the alteration by large amounts of drugs—they must face the issue of withdrawal on their own. And that can be a lethal combination for the individual and society.

From experience we believe there has to be more beds at crisis treatment centers which would provide a halfway house between staying in an acute care facility and being released to the street.

When determined to be necessary, patients need to be able to go straight from an acute care facility to a crisis treatment center, not wait days or weeks.

Cc: Sen. Bettye Davis  
Rep. Sharon Cissna  
Rep. Peggy Wilson  
Trust Authority  
DHSS  
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Open letter

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