



PAIMI Advisory Council Empowerment Project Description

The PAIMI Advisory Council Empowerment Project (Empowerment Project) is a collaboration of the Law Project for Psychiatric Rights (PsychRights) and MindFreedom International seeking to galvanize Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Agencies under the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) Act to pursue the PAIMI Act's purpose to ensure the rights of individuals with mental illness are protected by making enforcing people's rights not to be psychiatrically incarcerated or drugged or electroshocked against their will a high priority and work with them to develop and implement strategies to achieve this purpose. PsychRights and MindFreedom believe P&As should embrace this priority and are eager to work with them on it.

The current mental health system's ubiquitous insistence on psychiatric drugs is reducing the recovery rate of people diagnosed with serious mental illness from a possible 80% to 5% and reducing their life spans by 20-25 years on average.¹ The notion that psychiatrically incarcerating someone prevents them from harming themselves is ludicrous since psychiatric incarceration is massively associated with suicides.²

A substantial portion of these horrendous outcomes is driven by psychiatric incarceration and forced drugging while no more than 10% of psychiatric incarcerations meet the legal criteria, and no one can be constitutionally drugged against their will because it requires that it be in the person's best interest and there are no less intrusive alternatives, neither of which are ever true.³

These massive and pervasive rights violations leading to such horrendous outcomes is exactly what the PAIMI Act was enacted to address. Both Kristina (KK) Kapp of MindFreedom and James B. (Jim) Gottstein, Esq., of PsychRights are psychiatric survivors and tend to relate well with Advisory Council members who have received or are receiving mental health services. In their experience, a large majority of Council members with this lived experience believe enforcing people's rights not to be psychiatrically incarcerated or drugged or electroshocked against their will should be a high priority for their P&A.

The Advisory Councils and their P&As are to jointly develop their annual PAIMI Act priorities⁴ and, frankly, that stopping people from being psychiatrically incarcerated and drugged or electroshocked against their will in violation of their rights should be a high priority seems obvious. The challenging task is to develop a strategy(ies) to stop these massive rights violations. The Empowerment Project looks forward to collaborating with P&As to achieve this.

¹ See Report on Improving Mental Health Outcomes, <https://psychrights.org/ReportOnImprovingMentalHealthOutcomes.pdf>.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ 42 U.S.C. § 10805(c)(2)(B).