

Gov. Sarah Palin,

January 28, '08

We are asking for your help.

In 2006, Washington's Governor Christine Gregoire forced their DHSS to adopt new rules and regulations, which when implemented helped protect psychiatric patients from sexual exploitation and abuse. And also reduced trauma to psychiatric patients by allowing patients privacy when dressing and undressing. (News release attached.)

We are asking that you force DISS to adopt new rules. Behavioral Health's 4 pages of requirements concerning grievances are terrible. As of now, DHSS doesn't have a clue of the number and type of grievances filed concerning sexual abuse, physical abuse, denial of services and denial of rights granted by statute.

There are 82 grantee psychiatric facilities along with hospital psychiatric units which handle thousands of psychiatric patients a year.

In addition, we want the state to maintain statistics on the number and type of grievances filed at their approximately 90 locations. And maintain an office to assist patients (additional information attached.)

We also want the assistance of your office to support the passage of Senate Bill 8 which requires a good faith effort by the psychiatric institutions to give a psychiatric patient their choice of the gender of staff doing the patient's intimate care services.

We are also asking for your support of Senate Bill 186 which revises the present psychiatric patient grievance procedure statute—AS47.30.847.

Alaska has some of the worst patient rights in the country. In a 12 month period in '05 /'06, three sexual assault allegations were filed at API. None of the patients received a written answer to their grievance. None of the patient's grievances were heard in front of an Impartial Body, etc. ---There are 90 other locations out there. Without pressure, DHSS/ Behavioral Health will never make adequate improvements.

Some hospitals use a standard JCAHO grievance procedure which is not adequate to protect those with dementia or diminished capacity. (grievance procedure critique attached.)

Like the Governor in Washington, we are asking that you take an active interest.

Please let us know if you will help us.

Mental Health Advocates
Faith Myers / Dorrance Collins
3240 Penland Pkwy, Sp. 35
Anchorage, AK. 99508
(907) 929-0532

Cc: Open letter

Faith Myers Dorrance Collins