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To: Committee, FHS (REPS)

Subject: COMMITTEE SECRETARY; THE AFFECT OF ILICIT DRUGS ON

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Human Services
House of Representatives

Hello, my name is [REDACTED] and to my knowledge my daughter first sampled heroin at about age 16 at [REDACTED] then she began burning regularly in year 12 when she was 17 years old again with a lot of her class friends; 5 of whom she has had to bid fair well after they overdosed.

I wish to tell you a little of my life with a Heroin addict Daughter, who is now in jail for armed robbery.

My daughter may be 23yrs old but her mental capacity is the same as an adolescents.

My sister's only 2 children are both opiate addicts also.

It started when I left my daughter at aged 17 with my youngest sister so I wouldn't interrupt her schooling for year 12. I returned to the country property to recover from Breast cancer.

Due to the misconception 'of government public announcements on television' at the time we believed that there was a small withdrawal time of three days then my daughter would simply get on with her life. Not True.

I wanted my daughter to have treatment, for some months to be able to recover and my husband said she'd be alright, so that was the beginning of my new life as I now know it.

Also the fact that she could get money from the CES so she didn't have to listen to her parents as she was financially independent, even though I told them of my concerns for her at the time about her drug use.

At the beginning I contacted the drug squad at Kingsville station (which was on Geelong Road) and I spoke to the Sergeant in charge about what appeared to be selling of drugs outside of the Footscray City Secondary College. At that time I took details of car registration numbers, description of the offender which I past on to the police. I never had any feed back from the police and this was well before I became aware of my daughters drug experimentation.

The government needs to help people assist there loved ones that are in this situation by giving them the power to force them into rehabs for there own good at least for long enough to really help and have proper on going counseling.

The main problem is that kids don't see the big picture when they start down this road and you don't have the power to force them into a good program or continues counseling.

I am the 1st of 6 children, 2 of my brothers have said the family would be better of if they died of an

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overdose so we could get on with life. The family functions are a constant concern with everyone worrying about money going missing and items being stolen and sold for drugs.

Due to my daughter's addiction and my lack of knowledge about drug use I was stagnated in my growth financially, personally, emotionally and have also divorced.

The first 3 years I cried every night for the (lose of my daughter the girl I knew,) the constant worry that she would overdose and the horrible life she lead.

My daughter did spent 5 months at Narcanon [REDACTED] with promising results unfortunately she didn't complete the program. My daughter seemed great for about 5 months after that but thought she would use occasionally. She then attended other places and has at least completed 12 withdrawals over the years up to date. During her last stay at Narcanon she picked up her last partner, even though I said on the first visit that I did not want her to associate with this boy, my daughter was ejected with this boy and 5 others (this rehab cost me \$16,000 on this occasion) because she had been there before, normal price \$23,000. All the people had broken some rule or other according to Narcanon, I personally think they don't care at all unless you show an interest in becoming staff at the end of treatment, it's all about the money and they're government funded as they get all the dole money from each person on top of the initial fee.

On one occasion I dropped my daughter at the local withdrawal unit only to find out that she left because they wouldn't medicate her to ease the withdrawal. Unfortunately I had booked a week away and had paid in advance, so she could get away and then on with her life. While in Sydney I let her sleep in, she woke I wasn't there. In her mind I had left her, she trashed the room and when she found me in the arcade she made such a seen yelling abuse. Then she had a tantrum in Darling Harbour laying in the street kicking and screaming, I don't know what she used to coarse this reaction.

The main problem is that they don't see the big picture when they start down this road and you don't have the power to force them into a good program and quality counseling for as long as it takes.

As my daughter said yesterday when I visited her "That as much as you want to stop using the withdrawal from heroin is so painful that the hunger for the drug far out ways everything else till you get it, then the pain of what you've done to get it sets in and the guilt begins again"; As she sees it theft if a better option than prostitution.

The government needs to be pro drugs in the form of better drug education to solve this issue. Australia needs to educate children with the real life story they will face if they choose drugs, not educating them how to use drugs or supplying needles (Hep C is increasing by 20.000 a year) so handing out clean syringes are not the answer. These centers are willing to give out boxes of 100 syringes at any one time. So who are supervising them to correctly use these syringes? This leaves them at risk of sharing them with other teens.

Self esteem for children starting with smaller size classes in the first 3 years so they get the attention they deserve and paying women enough so they can stay home if they wish to look after the most important resouse that we have.

I thank you for this opportunity to speak.

My personal details are supplied so you may contact me if necessary, but not for public viewing as I would like to stay anonymous.