



11.04.05

Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Mental Health
Inquiry into Mental Health Issues

*With reference to the terms of reference e) the extent to which unmet need in **supported accommodation, employment, family, and social support services**, is a barrier to to better mental health outcomes.*

"As parents of a young man diagnosed with Bi Polar Mood Disorder – Rapid Cycling, we wish to address the inadequacy of community care that we have received. Our son was diagnosed eight years ago after experiencing a psychotic episode whilst he was attending a regional university. No support or information about the disorder was provided to our family. My husband left his work to be the full time carer for our son but because he was not encouraged by his doctor to go on the disability pension, we were not eligible for the carer's pension. We have continuously sought out information but have to travel 50 km. to Melbourne to access support groups. It has been eight years that our son has been unwell, however this year his moods have settled and he has recently taken up paid employment. This is still an enormous struggle for him due to the stigmatization of mental illness. As parents of a 30 year old young man who still cannot organize himself to pay his bills and remember appointments, we want ongoing counseling and emotional support to be regularly provided to him by someone other than ourselves. We have been the main players in his life - he feels the need not to be dependent on us and resents the current situation. Just because he is not drug dependent and has always been compliant with medication, he should not be precluded from the support that will be vital to his successful integration back into the community – but what is available outside of Melbourne?"

Yours sincerely,