

Sent: Wednesday, 27 April 2005 10:13 AM

To: Committee, Mental Health (SEN)

Subject: Mental Health Study

As the wife of a sufferer of Bipolar disorder and the stepmother of a least one diagnosed child I feel that the services open to the families and carers is totally inadequate given the severity and possible consequences of mental illnesses.

In the three years since my husband was diagnosed after a horrifying attempt on his life ,we have had little or no support apart from that which we had to obtain through private services at very high cost. We are lucky that at this time it is affordable to us but given the severity of the illness and the likelihood of him working in the long term, this will not always be the case.

Many of the carers and family members often fear for their own safety living with someone who may harm themselves or the carer or relative when the patient becomes unwell. Even when the patient is on medication there is no guarantee that the family is safe and many of us are in need of support and care ourselves. Without these family members and carers the government would have an even bigger issue to deal with and an even larger budget to be provided.

I firmly believe that the community is in need of education regarding the rapidly growing problem of mental health, and that those who love or care for the mentally ill members of the community should have guidance and help offered without the high cost of private care which at present we are forced to pay for.

I would be very interested to see the outcome of any Senate Inquiry held - and hope that there will be some positives achieved towards dealing with the problems of the mentally ill. If you have any questions I would be more than happy to provide any help or information I can.