

John Q. Consumer
126 A Street
Somewhere, Alabama 99999

October 1, 2011

The Honorable Joan Smith
House of Representatives
Alabama State House
11 South Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130

Re: Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) Funding

Dear Representative Smith:

I am a lifelong resident of Alabama and currently reside in Montgomery. I am writing to ask for your consideration of important mental health services when you are faced with budget decisions in the upcoming session of the legislature. Further cuts to the ADMH budget will have negative consequences for important community programs in our area.

Two years ago I realized that I had lost control of my life. I had begun to use alcohol and drugs to cope with the everyday pressures I faced at work and at home. After I lost my job and nearly everything else, my family and friends gave me the greatest gift, an intervention. As a result of their gift I entered a treatment program at ABC Substance Abuse Treatment Center in Mobile. During this treatment program I was also diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder. Bipolar Disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, is a brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood, energy, activity levels, and the ability to carry out day-to-day tasks. Symptoms of bipolar disorder are severe. They are different from the normal ups and downs that everyone goes through from time to time. Bipolar disorder symptoms can result in damaged relationships, poor job or school performance, and even suicide. But bipolar disorder can be treated, and people with this illness can lead full and productive lives. The services that I received at ABC have helped me to start on that road to recovery. I have been free of alcohol and substance for two years and I am receiving treatment for Bipolar Disorder. I have repaired my family relationships and have returned to my old career. Had treatment not been available I have no doubt I wouldn't have survived another year. Treatment is our only hope. Please vote to restore ADMH funding to pre-proration levels for 2013 so that community programs for Substance Use Disorder and mental illnesses can continue. The health, wellbeing and survival of our communities rely on them.

If you desire more information about Substance Use Disorder or mental illnesses such as Bipolar Disorder there are many great resources available on the internet or please feel free to contact me and I will send you information. Thank you for your consideration of the funding needs for the mental health of Alabama citizens and the Alabama Department of Mental Health, an essential function of our state's government.

Sincere regards,