

My name is Karen Olson, and I have a 28-year-old son who was diagnosed with a serious mental illness 4 to 5 years ago. I am very concerned about the lack of available services within our community for him and others who are mentally ill. My son remains unmedicated because he is suffering from anosognosia – a lack of awareness about his psychiatric condition. When in crisis, I pray that one of the social workers (Madeline or Anna) is available to come out with the WPD, as they are both familiar with him. However, the social workers aren't on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When someone is in crisis at 5am or on a weekend, they are left suffering. They sometimes hurt themselves, get hurt (or worse, like Kevin Casey, who was recently killed in a hit and run), cause harm to others and/or cause property damage. They should have access to the same services 24 hours a day, every day, including triage crisis care.

In mid-2022, my son was in crisis, and ended up in jail for 8 months because he vandalized a window at a gas station when he was denied access to the bathroom. He is not a criminal – he is mentally ill. He received NO mental health services while incarcerated. He was, however, placed in solitary confinement multiple times. He has a psychiatric diagnosis and is considered gravely ill. That should have been determined soon after he was picked up. He was released to the care of Hope Cooperative, where he was placed in a house with others with similar mental illnesses. He didn't last long there because, again, he is unmedicated. He was moved 4 or 5 times, and finally ended up in a tiny home in Woodland. He didn't have much contact with Hope Cooperative due to staffing shortages and other issues. We need better supervision of the contracts that are issued to providers like Hope Cooperative to ensure that the clients are not left alone for weeks at a time like my son has been. He has recently received a 30-day eviction notice due to extensive damage to his unit. My son can't live with others, and he can't live alone. Hope Cooperative said that he will be placed in another room and board. I often hear, "there are gaps in the system" and "we are understaffed". Hire more employees, perhaps even college interns, to help with understaffing issues.

What we need is more services...NOW. We need more facilities in Yolo County like Pine Tree Gardens in Davis, where those with mental illnesses can get the help that they need.

Thank you for your time.