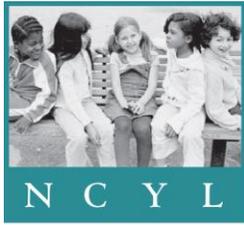




Disability Rights
WASHINGTON
Washington's protection and advocacy system

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National Center for Youth Law

NHeLP
NATIONAL HEALTH LAW PROGRAM



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 30, 2013

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Systemic overhaul of Medicaid for youth with mental illness:

Proposed settlement to statewide class action filed yesterday

SEATTLE – “I don’t even know how to be a regular kid anymore,” said Tina Fricke, one of the 10 youth who filed the class action lawsuit *T.R. et al. v. Quigley et al.* against the state of Washington. “I had to leave my home and family years ago to get the treatment I needed.”

Fricke and nine fellow youth stepped up to represent thousands of young people in the state who use Medicaid insurance and need intensive mental health services. Their lawsuit calls for the state to create a Medicaid system that delivers intensive, individualized services to young people in their homes or in the most home-like setting possible in the community. Providing home and community-based care can help prevent hospitalization, long in-patient stays, and placements in foster care and juvenile justice facilities.

“I think it is important to give kids access to treatment at home. This allows them to be with other kids and their families,” said Fricke, now 19, graduated from high school, preparing for college and living at home with her father.

Yesterday, a proposed settlement agreement that outlines a plan to deliver intensive in-home treatment to youth using Washington’s Medicaid system was filed with federal U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Zilly.

"This settlement agreement is a significant accomplishment and puts Washington among the leaders in the country in reforming the mental health system and providing Medicaid services to children," said Kimberly Lewis, Managing Attorney at the National Health Law Program.

David Carlson, Director of Legal Advocacy at Disability Rights Washington added, “The team of lawyers we assembled to represent the youth reflects the national significance of this case.”

Disability Rights Washington teamed with the international law firm Perkins Coie, who volunteered their time, and dedicated lawyers from the National Center for Youth Law and the National Health Law Program, as well as Young Minds Advocacy Project, a new non-profit founded to advocate for low income youth with mental health needs.

In the agreement, the defendants in the case, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services and the Health Care Authority, commit to provide class members with (1) intensive care coordination, (2) intensive home and community based services, and (3) mobile crisis intervention and stabilization services.

“In addition,” according to Leecia Welch, Senior Attorney for the National Center for Youth Law, “children will be served in a collaborative team setting that puts youth and families at the center of planning and treatment.”

The objective of the settlement agreement is to deliver these medically necessary services to all eligible class members in a timely manner no matter where in the state they live. Due to the size and scope of the system reform, it will take as long as five years to complete implementation.

“The plaintiffs and the State agreed that the needs of these most vulnerable children, youth and their families would not be served by a long-drawn-out litigation. We determined that providing intensive services in their homes and communities is the best approach to improving the outcomes for children and youth with the greatest need.” said Jane Beyer, DSHS Assistant Secretary, for Behavioral Health and Service Integration.

The proposed settlement agreement must be reviewed by class members and approved by the Court. Over the next few months, class members will have an opportunity to review the agreement, learn more about it through trainings being provided around the state, talk to the attorneys who represent the class, and submit opinions about the proposed settlement agreement to class counsel and the Court.

“We are confident that the Court will approve this agreement,” said Patrick Gardner, President of Young Minds Advocacy Project, “because it commits the state to increase access to care to thousands of young people who need intensive services and supports to remain safely in their homes, succeed in school, and avoid getting into trouble.”

Additional information:

Video announcement:

Link - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ju8ypi91_Lc&feature=c4-overview&list=UUN8Mcrh5M3ohcXwR5HFnljg

Embed coding - `<iframe width="420" height="315" src="//www.youtube.com/embed/ju8ypi91_Lc" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>`

The full agreement, legal notice, and the time and locations of the trainings will all be posted at: <http://www.disabilityrightswa.org/kids-community-based-mental-health>.

Individuals who believe they may be affected by the settlement can get more information and have questions about the agreement answered by contacting Disability Rights Washington at 1-800-562-2702.