

Subject: Hearing, Richmond, Virginia, Special Populations Group, 10/28/2014
From: Sue Hunter (rcretired@yahoo.com)
To: epechomusic@yahoo.com;
Date: Sunday, October 26, 2014 5:18 PM

Mental Health Services
21st Century, Joint Committee
Special Populations Group

My name is Bill Hunter. I'm from Roanoke, Virginia. With me today is my wife Sue and son Tom. I come here today as a parent of a brain injured child. I represent all parents in Virginia of brain injured children. Everyday, these parents get up in the morning and ask: 'What am I going to do with Tom?....with Judy?....with Florence?....with Sam?....
....with John?'

You see, we as parents want a safe and loving place for our children as we pass on to the next generation. I am now 69 and my wife is 68. It's time for us to make long term plans for our son Tom. Through our Mental Health Services in Roanoke, our son was put on a Medicaid waiver system as a long term qualifier for a group home. We were invited to a new one of these facilities in Covington, Virginia, where Tom was asked to live. We visited there with Tom's case manager from Blue Ridge Services, the local Mental Health Services branch in Southwest Virginia.

The first thing that happened as we walked in the door was a man got up, ran to Tom and tried to strangle him. After the staff got him settled down, we took a tour. The rooms were adequate and the proposal was that Tom share one with another person. The staff was welcoming. There was an open living room with a TV on and a separate dining room.

We settled around a table with the staff in the dining room where we asked questions back and forth of each other. One question I asked was: "What is the cost to the State of Virginia per person for your facility?"

The person in charge said : "\$670.00"

I further inquired: "A month?"

She said: "A day."

My math skills quickly figured that cost to be over \$20,000 per month that the State of Virginia was willing to pay for our son to live in this group home.

Now, the home had people with all types of mental challenges living there. There was no distinct abnormality prevalent. It was a grouping together of adults with different needs.

Our older daughter, Kim, is a Special Education teacher at the University School at East Tennessee State University. My wife, Sue, is a retired Special Education teacher from the Roanoke County School System. Because Tom had his brain injury at the age of two and is now 44, our family has had good training with Special Needs People.

Each and every one of these people are special! And they all have Special Angels that watch over them! Believe me, I know - if I didn't do something that was right for Tom, Tom's Special Angel would let me know about it in some way. But, if I did do for him and others like him, blessings seemed to come our way and we were given additional strength to function another day and go on!

Kim suggested we look at a place called The Crumley House in Limestone, Tennessee, for Tom's long term care. We have invited the Director, Guynn Edwards, here today to speak to the Committee. We visited this facility 14 miles from Johnson City where we have two girls and their families close by.

From the moment we saw this sprawling campus and stepped into the front door, we knew we were entering a loving environment, suitable for our son. The front opens into a spacious living area and

dining facility. Several residents welcomed us there, especially Lorie, the founder's daughter, who was brain injured and whose Mother, June, led the charge to form Crumley House, a facility to deal with brain injured people.

The rooms were very bright and well attended. The facility was clean and well spread out. The rooms were spacious and reminded me of a small apartment, with each having a sitting room, a bathroom and a bedroom.

Crumley House has a day program consisting of rehabilitative exercises, classes on such areas as computers and sewing, and outside and off campus activities for it's residents and day students. It concentrates solely on brain injury. Monday through Friday classes run from 9 AM to 3 PM daily with lunch included. The cost of the day program by itself is \$550.00 per month for participants.

We decided to try Tom in the day program to see how he fit in and to see if the staff thought he would be a suitable candidate for long term care. My wife took Tom, rented an apartment in Johnson City, and Tom attended the day program in July and August. He fit in well - they loved him and he loved them!

Tom became a full time resident of Crumley House in September. The cost to our family is \$2,500.00 a month. This includes full room and board and the day program. As stated before, this compares to a cost to the State of Virginia of over \$20,000.00 per month to care for Tom long term.

Now, our funds will not last over a long term for Tom to be cared for at The Crumley House. He will have to revert back to a group home here in the State of Virginia where there is no facility specifically designed for head injured people like Tom.

Head injuries are different from other types of mental challenges like autism, mental retardation and schizophrenia. It needs special treatment from specialists like other challenges do. Why? The answer is to make the participants productive members of our society!

Inclusiveness is the buzzword of the day now. If we can take these populations and treat them for their special needs, these people can help society and not be a drag on society. Grouping them together in a group home to 'exist', watch TV and to be babysat is not the way forward!

And the savings of this alternative I present to you would be fantastic! The Governor is calling on the Legislature and State Offices to save money. Each person admitted to Crumley House would save the State \$1,000,000 over a 5 year period. 50 new additions would save the State of Virginia \$50,000,000 over the same time. We can do our part to help our State and help our families and most of all - our children!

Please recognize this plea for help from a parent who also represents others who are part of our Commonwealth. And you, in turn, will be blessed by all the Special Angels of these dear people!

Thank you and God bless you in your work. I leave you with the greeting Lorie gave me at The Crumley House the last time I visited Tom. She looked up from her wheel chair and said "I love you" and kissed my hand.

I am Bill Hunter, Tom's dad.

Our address:

Our son's name is Tom Hunter

Bill and Sue Hunter
4536 Andover Court
Roanoke, Virginia 24018

Telephone: 540-772-1038

Email: Bill = epechomusic@yahoo.com
Sue = RCRetired@yahoo.com

Address of The Crumley House:

%Gwynn Edwards, Director
The Crumley House
300 Ubanna Road
Limestone, Tennessee 37681

Telephone: 423-257-3644

Email: gwynn@crumleyhouse.com

Sent from my iPad

Subject: Fwd: October 28 Meeting
From: Bill Hunter (epechomusic@yahoo.com)
To: guynn@crumleyhouse.com;
Date: Wednesday, October 22, 2014 1:48 PM

Guynn, Thought this would be helpful to the cause of helping brain injured people and that you would be familiar with the guidance and able to interpret it.

Best Regards,
Bill Hunter

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Sherman, Paula (Kaine)" <Paula_Sherman@kaine.senate.gov>
Date: October 22, 2014 at 1:16:25 PM EDT
To: "epechomusic@yahoo.com" <epechomusic@yahoo.com>
Subject: October 28 Meeting

Mr. Hunter,

Again, it was a pleasure to speak with you today regarding your son, Tom, and the great work you are doing to bring attention to the need for additional resources for people with brain injuries.

I forwarded your email to our Healthcare Legislative Aide, Kristen Molloy, and asked her to respond. She states:

“The Commonwealth receives state grant funding from the Federal Traumatic Brain Injury Program at Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Here is a more comprehensive list of TBI funding in Virginia: <file:///C:/Users/km45338/Downloads/DARS-State-Services.pdf>

It is up to the Commonwealth to determine specifics around how the funding is utilized (as long as it meets federal criteria for grant funding, which I imagine the VA programs do) and any approval of assistance would go through the State. I would say that you can definitely go to the meeting to get more information. At this point, a lot of the specifics will depend on state action so I don't know what role, if any, we can play at this point. Additionally, we can't endorse something at the state level that we haven't seen a written proposal for and it's something that the state has jurisdiction, particularly since this isn't a grant application or something we routinely do.”

I look forward to meeting you and your family next week.

Many thanks,

Paula

Paula Sherman

U.S. Senator Tim Kaine

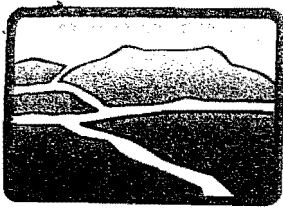
Suntrust Center

919 East Main Street, Suite 970

Richmond, VA 23219

804-771-2221





**Blue Ridge
Behavioral
Healthcare**

COPY

Executive Director
Tim Steller

February 21, 2014

Ms. Leslie Kerr
Quality Assurance Office
Department of Medical Assistance Services
600 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Ms. Kerr:

I am writing in support of Mr. Thomas (Tom) Hunter (Medicaid # 770101669017) and his efforts to secure access to residential services at the Crumley House in Limestone, TN. Tom Hunter and Bill Hunter, his father and guardian, have investigated and visited this program and believe that it offers appropriate services for Mr. Hunter at a lower cost than ICF/ID services secured in the state of Virginia. While I am aware that a request such as the Hunter's is out of the norm for Virginia's Department of Medical Assistance Services, I did offer my support for their request to seek services from that program. With this in mind, I am writing this letter in support of their efforts to find the best option for services for Tom.

If you have questions or require additional details, please feel free to contact me using the contact information below. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Ed McGrath
Director, Developmental Services for Adults
Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare
611 McDowell Avenue
Roanoke, VA 24016
(540) 342-6003
emcgrath@brbh.org

Cc: Mr. Tom Hunter
Mr. Bill Hunter