

**Governor Sean Parnell,**

**3/29/2014**

The Department of Health and Social Services is required by law (AS47.30.590 Comprehensive Services) to adopt regulations that will assure the rights of psychiatric patients.

Ask DHSS to show you the regulations they have written or adopted concerning protection of a psychiatric patient in crisis wanting to file a grievance or appeal in a psychiatric facility or unit; or because of denial of service, and for good measure ask DHSS about the due process rights they have written concerning the patient grievance/ appeal process.

**(DHSS is failing.)**

DHSS at this time may not even have the legal authority to write patient grievance regulations, due process, etc. that will cover all psychiatric patients locked in units, even though DHSS has the legal obligation to do so—if so, the law needs to be revised.

Please ask DHSS about those issues.

DHSS can impose patient grievance rules on units that receive grant money, but that does not protect the most vulnerable psychiatric patients, the very individuals DHSS has been charged with protecting.

Please support improving grievance rights for **all** psychiatric patients and House Bill 214.

Thank you in advance for your help,

Cc: Rep. Pete Higgins  
William J. Streur, Commissioner—DHSS  
Rep. Geran Tarr  
Sen. Johnny Ellis  
Rep. Wes Keller  
Open Letter

Mental Health Advocates, Faith Myers/ Dorrance Collins, 3240 Penland Pkwy, Sp. 35  
Anchorage, AK.99508 (907) 929-0532

*Faith Myers*      *Dorrance Collins*

**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee  
For the passage of HB 214 CS**

**3/29/14**

Mr. Chair, Committee members, My name is Faith Myers. I volunteer as a psychiatric patient advocate.

Around 2002, I received psychiatric treatment from state-run Alaska Psychiatric Institute, Providence's Psychiatric Emergency Room and Anchorage Community Mental Health Services.

I did have reason to file complaints. They ranged from denial of service, physically assaulted (given a black eye by staff) and denial of basic rights guaranteed in law.

In all cases, I was never able to obtain a written copy of the grievance procedure and appeal process, could not file an appeal and I could not even get a written answer in two cases.

The severely mentally ill come in all shapes and sizes. As a group they will be mistreated in a broad spectrum of settings far more often than the average person.

We are asking for the passage of HB214CS so that psychiatric patients will have more equitable grievance rights in law and rights that are fair to psychiatric patients.

Thank you



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**Reference Information:**

Approximately 10,000 individuals each year are considered acute care psychiatric patients—court ordered to receive treatment, forced evaluations and/or civil commitments.