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LETTER: Don't change policies for prescriptions for mentally ill

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I have been an advocate for the mentally ill for many, many years.

Top officials know me as an honest person who voices very strongly for the rights of mentally ill patients.

I strongly disagree with Alabama's Medicaid proposal to cut brand-name anti-psychotic medications on the state Medicaid prescriptions list. It could cause a major disaster.

This action is so wrong. Dr. E. Fuller Torrey, a past keynote speaker for the National Alliance on Mental Illness and a world-known psychiatrist, brain researcher and author of many books on serious mental illness, has stated many times that it is so hard to find medications to stabilize psychotic mental patients so they can remain coherent.

Why? Because each psychotic mental patient's body chemistry is different. That is why, when these anti-psychotic drugs are given, so many times it is through trial actions until, hopefully, a psychotic patient finally will respond to a drug that the psychiatrist has finally found that will work.

This is why it is so important, once a medication is found to stabilize mental patients, to leave them alone. Do not change these medications.

How is it saving Alabama Medicaid money if it changes these anti-psychotic medications, and the new medications don't work?

Psychotic mental patients will not know to go to a local doctor. Usually, the police have to intervene and take them to jail. If by chance, they go to the emergency room, it's a tremendous hospital bill, or if a mental patient has too many psychotic breaks, they do not return to reality.

Jerry Delk

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