A Grandmother's Story

Shared anonymously

My story is very similar to another grandmother's.

Our grandson is in his sixth year of diagnosis with mental illness/brain disorder and still has no insight into his condition which is known as anosognosia, a brain dysfunction.

Last year 2020, his illness took a turn for the worse as he was able to cancel his CTO (Community Treatment Order) for his monthly needle as his lawyer deemed him fully capable of managing his health and prescribed meds, against his doctor's orders due to his numerous hospitalizations after being formed by us, police and doctors.

We were not aware of how the system works with the advocacy lawyers but learned of this in 2020.

Covid created additional problems as we could not visit him during the emergency and hospitalizations.

My grandson presents well and responds well to his meds, so very quickly he was released and sometimes he was not even admitted although the police told us that he is clearly very ill. He had 8 encounters with the police last year. Many times they said that the hospital would not admit him.

In early June 2020 we had him removed from our home because he deteriorated and his behaviour changed and was agitated to the point of verbal aggression. He had started self medicating with street drugs and we became fearful having to deal with this new problem of which we knew nothing and pressure from the doctor and others.

Had he stayed on the CTO this would not have happened. He was able to work for most of 2019 when on the CTO.

From June-October 2020 he was homeless and we kept in contact with him providing much support. He got into wrong company and continued to spiral downward.

Late October he was arrested and his car impounded up in Port Perry way up north. He entered a home which appeared abandoned to find safety from guys with guns following him.

This last experience was very traumatic for him and us.

We managed to get an emergency appointment with his doctor and he was formed and admitted and placed in lock down for a week. The second week in the regular ward he was able to contact his lawyer and was released back on the streets.

With all the trauma of the previous 5 months with his homelessness and deterioration we took him back under our full care.

As another grandmother in our group rightly said, our system is broken and the options for our loved ones is homelessness or jail, even the doctors, cops and social services confirm this.

This is wrong, unethical and heartless that citizens are not provided with the right care for such serious

brain disorders like we do for other serious and fatal illnesses.

We must re-evaluate our present scope of care, mental health and privacy acts involving all the professionals, services, patients and caregivers towards reforming our system in Canada.

Needless to say us caregivers are left to live with this stress and heartbreak in the hope that our loved ones can attain some level of safety and autonomy.