

3 October, 2015

Submission No: 002

Research Director
Health and Ambulance Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Sir

MENTAL HEALTH (RECOVERY MODEL) BILL 2015 – PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL

I submit that Section 282 of the recovery model bill should not be passed. This section asserts a patient's rights to privacy to the exclusion of the patient's family members.

My brother was diagnosed with chronic paranoid schizophrenia in the early 1970s. He is the subject of an involuntary treatment order.

For many years my family have battled with medical practitioners to get information about my brother's illness and his treatment. We had only my brother's best interest at heart. We were left floundering as to how best to deal with my brother, what treatment options were available to him, what treatment options were best for him, what we could do to ensure the best recovery model available was afforded to him.

My brother would not consent to the medical practitioners disclosing any information to us. But here is the crux – *the patient, a paranoid schizophrenic, lacks the insight and the capacity to make the decision whether to authorise open communication between his immediate family (mother and siblings) and his treating medical practitioners.*

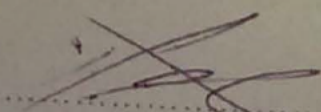
Since the changes to the legislation we now enjoy open communication with my brother's treatment team. We are able to work in an open communication environment for the best outcomes available for my brother.

Section 282 incorrectly presupposes a person with a mental illness possesses the requisite capacity to make decisions about whether or not to nominate a support person. This is a ludicrous assumption and displays a lack of understanding about the basic nature of paranoid schizophrenia.

Section 282 harks back to the bad old days of secrecy surrounding the patient, where family members were kept completely in the dark about the patient's treatment.

There are many families of paranoid schizophrenics who worked long and hard to remove the obstacle of open communication between a patient's family and treatment team. We cannot go back to the bad old days. Do not allow Section 282 in this bill to become legislation.

Yours faithfully


Kathy Fairweather