



Dear Ms. Mark,

I am writing to request that you support an increase in funding in Vancouver for emergency mobile mental health crisis intervention.

There are thousands of individuals in the Vancouver Coastal Health region alone who are diagnosed with a serious mental illness such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia. These illnesses very often involve a brain-based inability to know that one has an illness and therefore requires treatment. This is known as anosognosia and may also be seen in other illnesses such as stroke or Alzheimers.

This is a major reason that sometimes involuntary admission to hospital is necessary in order to help someone get treatment, who may otherwise remain in a psychotic state, and very vulnerable to harm.

My son is diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder - with anosognosia - and has required involuntary treatment on several occasions. His behaviour may become quite dangerous to himself and/or others during psychotic episodes, and he will refuse treatment, because of this lack of 'insight'.

Then, the only recourse that I have to help him, is to call the mobile crisis team Car 87/88 to come and do an in-home assessment and transport him to hospital.

Car 87/88 is a specialized joint project of Vancouver Coastal Health and the Vancouver Police Department. It consists of teams of one clinician - needed to do the mental health assessment - and one police officer, there to ensure the safety of all.

When I have been able to get hold of Car 87/88, and a team comes to my home, every such occasion has met with a good outcome, and the necessary admission to hospital takes place.

However, I know that myself and many other families have often not been able to get hold of Car 87/88 because there are only two cars for the entire city! When that happens, the fallout can be grave.

For example, in late 2020, the days-long delay I experienced in accessing assessment and transport to hospital resulted in a great deal of property damage. Delays may also result in social and financial damage; worsening of psychosis (thus longer time spent in hospital); physical injuries and even death.

I am asking you to call for increased funding for the desperately needed service Car 87/88 provides, so that it may be available in crises. Two cars is very evidently not enough for the large community they serve.

Sincerely,

Denise Swanson