

Wednesday February 26, 2015

Hannah O. Harmon,

Wife of %80 Disabled Veteran

Marine Corps, Veteran of Afghanistan

2362 Mary Drive

West Columbia, SC 29169

To Whom It May Concern,

My husband is Andrew Carrington Harmon, former Marine, under the care of Dr. Roy, Primary Care, and Dr. Downie, Psychiatrist, at The Department of Veterans Affairs, Dorn VA Hospital, here in Columbia South Carolina . Dr. Roy finally made the decision to refer Andrew to Dr. Downie whom he saw in August . Since seeing Dr. Downie, nothing has changed—actually, Andrew’s condition has worsened!

This past summer/ 2014, we invested in a very large and expensive garden which kept Andrew mentally and physically busy, working on a task . My husband must stay active . Once Andrew started the medication prescribed, I gave it about a month to start working, waiting on the medications to get into his system, but, it made things worse. Andrew went back and informed Dr. Downie about his severe mood swings. His actions now dictate our family routines.

Andrew has been on an emotional rollercoaster. He has followed all medical advice given to him. But, we need direction on where to go from here. He seems to be a ticking bomb waiting to explode. By the end of October I noticed even more highs and lows in my husband. I thought the VA was taking care of him and he was simply adjusting to medications, slowly working up to higher dosage . Right before Thanksgiving, I as his wife, was under great stress trying to handle his ups and downs . I called the crisis line, asked for help, called VA and was always transferred to someone ELSE!!! I was given four extension number to different buildings. I left more than FOUR messages before December—I NEVER HEARD ONE WORD BACK, and I never saw where the VA had reached out to my husband ! I was told by the Crisis Line to make sure I deleted my call log so that my husband wouldn’t see where I called . My husband Andrew always let me know when he had appointment, or if the VA called him, I checked his call log on the internet and Andrew had NO contact back from the VA , which we all know, including myself, anyone in medical field has to DOCUMENT EVERYTHING!!

While sleeping with my husband some nights I wake up to him standing up sleeping, having very loud conversations, OR many nights he sweats profusely, so badly that we went to Bed Bath and Beyond and bought the most expensive mattress protector for him. I now wash sheets and pillow cases

everyday. Regularly, my husband has horrible dreams where he thinks he is drowning. On other nights I have awoken to him kicking me, and he doesn't wake up .

Because of my husband's mental instability, his college classes, our new baby, and our marriage, I was forced to make a decision to resign from my job to focus on my husband and use my time to get him the best treatment to which he is entitled. Thank you in advance for reading this, my appeal for help.

PLEASE HELP US!!!!

Wednesday February 25th 2015

Andrew C. Harmon

2362 Mary Drive

West Columbia, SC 29169

Marine Corps Veteran/80% Disability

Afghanistan Survivor—Phone #803-979-4643

I AM IN GREAT NEED OF HELP!!!! PLEASE, SOMEONE, GIVE THIS LETTER ATTENTION!!!

I am writing this letter to state what has been going on with me personally. Since I started receiving care in January 2013 at the Dorn VA Hospital I have really received UNSATISFACTORY CARE, physically and mentally. I have taken many suggestions and followed all instruction by my different doctors. I felt things were going to get better in August 2014, when I was referred out from Primary Care by Dr. Roy, to start seeing Dr. Downie who is my Psychiatrist.

Unfortunately my problems have only gotten worse. I started on different medications, and every time after that my medications have constantly increased; but no change in my constant up and down moods. Dr. Downie and I have never seen eye to eye on things. At first I felt as if I could move on and get past our differences. Over a course of time, when I would speak to him and he would sort of blow me off, not in a rude verbal way but in a physical body language way. He would never hear my concerns. He would simply say schedule an appointment with Alan Jones. Which I did and would speak with him many times. I would express my concerns and the way I was feeling and I would ask if he had talked to Dr. Downie. Alan would tell me that he could not do much that he was just there to talk to. It has been like I continually get a run around. I have expressed many different times I do want to get better. I have also expressed numerous different times that I do not want to take medications my entire life. It has been suggested I need medications to help me for a time, from both Dr. Roy and Dr. Downie. I have done as directed.

Changing medications has caused me many different mood swings, as before without medications. Even after taking multiple medications, I still have fits of anger or just fits of depression that I can't seem to escape from. At times I feel like I'm being put in a box or locked in a box screaming for help but NO ONE WILL LISTEN to my concerns or my family's concerns!!!! Multiple times my wife and I both have called Dr. Downie and left voicemails but HE NEVER RETURNS OUR PHONE CALLS! We've come in to speak with him but he continually ignores us. My wife and I both feel he has no heart or passion in what he does. We both feel he is inconsiderate of my opinion or my wife's opinion. Also, my mother -in-law, who recently quit working for the DOD as a PTSD Doctor; has also noticed different changes in my mood. With her knowledge and education, and being married to a former Lt. Col. who also had PTSD, and took his life last year, she has stated numerous times that I need to go see my Psychiatrist. It has gotten to the point where WE NO LONGER HAVE FAITH in the Dorn VA Mental Health Department. I have

mentioned several times to Dr. Downie my mother in laws opinion on my treatment. He simply states she's JUST a doctor—" I'm a Psychiatrist', he says.

I am beginning to see how serious my problems are when people outside my family (church members, Pastors, Professors, classmates, and friends) bring my unusual behavior to my attention. I was blinded to behavior problems until people outside my family began pointing out the way I would react to different situations.

Sadly, I am very disappointed with the care that has been given to me at Dorn Veteran's Hospital . I have decided to make both formal and informal complaints about this issue. My heart honestly breaks because if this is happening to me, it makes me wonder how many other injured veterans are receiving sloppy care. After hearing the negative reports on the news about different VA hospitals, I always stated they simply couldn't be true. Now I'm starting to believe they are. It brings me to have a concern for my brothers/veterans. It makes me think that maybe I need to stand up and say something. I always call a spade a spade. Since these events, my family and I have contacted our senator. He is well aware of what is going on. We are very persistent people and we will keep being persistent until we get answers. We also have no intention of letting up on this pursuit of correction. NOW, I NEED HELP!!!

Thank you for your concern and attention to this matter. I await hearing from you--

Sincerely,

Cpl. Andrew C. Harmon

United States Marine Corps