

Lopez, Donna

From: betsey [betseyiris@aol.com]
Sent: Friday, May 02, 2014 1:48 PM
To: dlopez@cambridgema.gov.
Subject: merging ER with PsychER at the Cambridge Hospital

Hi,

Will not be able to be at the meeting but have thought about the importance of this issue for patients I have seen over the years. Worked at Behavior Medicine at Cambridge Hospital for many many years. Also have worked in general ER at the Beth Israel. Until recent retirement was a L.I.C.S.W. Included in the many places where I was on staff was Mass. Mental Health and I am well aware of the overwhelming needs of the chronic, severely impaired "mentally ill" and the toll that is taken by their caretakers.

I definitely speak against merging the two separate departments. Have spent a few hours reading reports of such mergers and believe there is a negative impact both on the patients and the clinicians who serve them.

A quote from Julie Creswell, a Journalist writing in the Raleigh. N.C. area is consistent with many findings.

Hospitals, which cannot legally turn away any patient seeking care, say the influx of psychiatric patients is straining already busy E.R.'s and creating dangerous conditions. This spring, University Medical Center of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas declared an "internal disaster," shutting its doors to arriving ambulances for 12 hours, after mental patients filled up more than half of its emergency room beds. A suicidal patient took out a gun and shot herself in the head while in a hospital emergency room in New Mexico in January. With a crisis facing states, communities and hospitals across the country, experts say no clear solution has emerged. St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center in Syracuse created a separate psychiatric emergency department. Interim LSU Hospital in New Orleans opened a 10-bed mental health emergency room extension six years ago that is typically full. But in Raleigh, the goal is slightly different: keep the psychiatric patients out of the hospital emergency room altogether.

I do hope that there is no merger between Cambridge Hospital's medical and psychiatric emergency rooms.

Sincerely,

Betsey Ansin