

**HR 590 Testimony**  
**10/14/16**

My name is Stacie A. Brown and I've been a Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) since 2013. I am currently employed at Onala Recovery Center where I am on the "frontline" every day. As a CRS I interact with all walks of people. From the struggling addict to the person with several years of recovery that might be struggling in an area of their life. As a CRS I have been subjected to overcoming barriers daily and often.

The most difficult barrier I have encountered is when an individual doesn't have insurance and they need treatment. As a COMPASS Partner I begin by applying for Medicaid Insurance for them. That process takes up to 30 days to get a determination! The next step I take is trying to locate an ALDA bed. This is like trying to find a 4 leaf clover!! Most of the time the person seeking D&A treatment enters into Mental Health treatment due to the availability. That treatment is ineffective because they are not receiving the proper type of help. Another barrier is lack of treatment options (facilities). I have called places for a person with insurance (Medicaid) and been told the waiting list is a month long! Both situations are different but usually end with the same result...no treatment!

I would like to share an example of the process of helping an individual to get into treatment. Six (6) weeks ago a young man entered Onala Recovery Center seeking treatment. The gentleman had insurance so I began making phone calls. After three (3) hours we located him a bed in another county. That facility only kept him for detox (3 days). Soon after returning home he began to use again. On Monday his mother found him very intoxicated and was extremely worried that he would overdose so I suggested she get him to the Emergency Room of a hospital that has a detox. That hospital told her "it's an epidemic out there" and he just needs to "come down"! The next day he returned to Onala seeking long term in-patient help. Except for we found him blue/gray in our parking lot. He overdosed! I instantly administered Narcan, and a co-worker began CPR. The paramedics arrived and we suggested taking him back to the original hospital that said he just needed to come down from his high. They kept him overnight and on Wednesday I received a phone call from his mother stating they were discharging him. I begged and begged and begged them to keep him until I could locate a long term facility that would pick him up. I had to threaten them with calling the news! Finally they agreed. I located him a bed in Franklin, Pa at a facility that picked him up on Sunday. That was September 4<sup>th</sup>! He is still in that facility to this day!

This brings me to my other barrier...Housing! After facing the obstacles of getting a person into treatment they are faced with the barrier of where they are to go after treatment. The need for safe and supportive housing in Allegheny County is in high demand. To sum it up the barriers I commonly face while helping an individual access treatment is the wait time to obtain Medicaid, length of stay at treatment facilities, and safe housing after treatment.