

Don't be afraid of getting support at Mental Health Authority

Voice: **Constance J. Filiczkowski, Saginaw**

I am a mental health consumer at Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA), attending Bayside Lodge Clubhouse part-time and receiving case management services from Training and Treatment Innovations. I also volunteer with SCCMHA as a consumer leader on the Consumer Leadership Advocates Committee and with the Friends of First Choice of Saginaw.

What I think that people should be aware of is that you can get help at SCCMHA, and you shouldn't be afraid of getting support. I think people are scared to get help because of what others might think, but the more that people get help and spread the word, there will be less stigma about mental health. Many people are affected by mental illness or other mental health issues caused by a chemical imbalance, and deserve treatment just like any other illness. We need funding for both treatment and education about the illness itself.

I would also like to support the public funding for mental health services for persons who need help with emotional problems, and this in turn helps the community. If people get help and can take their medications and can stay out of the hospital, it will cost less money in the long run.

I have been involved with First Choice of Saginaw since last year. First Choice of Saginaw is a not-for-profit charitable organization in Saginaw County that raises funds annually to provide holiday gift cards for adults with serious disabilities living in residential settings. I lived in a foster care setting in the past and at that time I didn't even have the money to buy the clothes that I needed, such as socks, shoes and a coat, so I know what this is like.

I would like people to care about these persons in need and support them through First Choice of Saginaw. The First Choice of Saginaw Web address is www.saginawfc.org.

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