

Queen Myrick
Department of Behavioral Health
Performance Oversight Hearing Testimony
Committee on Health
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Good morning Councilmember Henderson and members of the Committee on Health. My name is Mrs. Lakisha Myrick and I am a proud parent of 6 adults and minors that attends Academy of Hope, Girls Global Academy, Friendship Woodridge and a college student at Norfolk State University in Wards 5 and 6, and also serve with Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE) on the Ward 5 PLE Board.

Thank you for the past investments for \$3.8M in additional funding for the SBMH program, \$2.4M to increase grant sizes for CBO providers and \$150K for a comprehensive cost study to determine the true cost of the SBMH program now and in the future are all really important investments in SBMH!

I am testifying today because I want to ensure that all children, and generations to come have much needed Mental Health supports, to allow them to not only progress academically but personally as well, regardless of ward or background.

Each of my children all have a story on how not having adequate mental health services failed them in their academic progress. Yet, I will cover only two. My son who is now 22 years old is still struggling to finish his education, from lack of attention and support in high school. Although he had a 504 plan, he was often overlooked because he was well behaved. It wasn't until his therapist diagnosed him with PTSD, that it was realized that my son's lack of participation in class did not come from lack of will, but from the anxiety he had when putting pen to paper due to abuse.

Moving forward to my 16 year old, who had an extremely rough sophomore year, where she was sent to Children's Hospital for Psych evaluations, referred by the school several times, but was never admitted. She was battling depression, anxiety and PTSD. Her behaviors became erratic, and she was not the same child who entered the school as a freshman. The staff was not equipped to take a step back and focus on being trauma informed causing my daughter to miss several days of school and her grades to drop tremendously. She is doing much better this year, but I believe if she would have had the support she needed in house, then we would have resolved this much sooner.



In order to address the issues of the need for extreme mental health services for our children, DC Leaders should take the time to not only look at the data, but go into the schools and see the needs of the scholars in real time.

Thank you for allowing me to testify and share what I want to see for our kids and our District.