

Mother

Father

Brother

Grandmother

**Timothy's Book:
Real Stories about the Cost of Health
Insurance Discrimination Against
Mental Illness & Chemical Dependency**

Friend

Sister

Grandfather

Neighbor

Published by SCAA on behalf of the Timothy's Law Campaign



*Shaping New York State public policy
for people in need since 1872*

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**Timothy's Book:
Real Stories About the Cost of Health
Insurance Discrimination Against
Mental Illness and Chemical Dependency**

This book has been compiled for a vigil held in observance of Timothy O'Clair's birthday on May 5, 2004. This would have been Timothy's 16th birthday if his life had not been cut short by his mental illness in 2001.

The stories contained in these pages come from the message board on the Timothy's Law Website (timothyslaw.org). In a little over a year, over three hundred messages have been posted by people who have struggled with mental illness or chemical dependency themselves or who have a family member who has endeavored to get care. The Timothy's Law website is sponsored by the Timothy's Law Campaign, a group advocating that health insurance policies treat mental health and chemical dependency equally with medical coverage, and is maintained by Timothy's brother, Chris O'Clair.

In New York State, most commercial insurance plans require higher out-of-pocket payments for outpatient and inpatient mental health and chemical dependency services than for other covered services. In addition, many plans arbitrarily cap coverage at 20 outpatient visits and 30 days of inpatient care, obliging the patient to pay out-of-pocket for any additional care needed. To stop this inequity, the Timothy's Law Campaign seeks passage of legislation that will compel insurers to provide coverage for mental health and chemical dependency services in the same manner as they do for physical illnesses.

This book is dedicated to Timothy O'Clair, his family and everyone who has stepped out of the shadow of stigma and discrimination to share their struggles with mental illness and chemical dependency in the hopes that by doing so, they can spare other people the heartache they have endured.



Timothy O'Clair
May 5, 1988-March 16, 2001

Messages from the Timothy's Law Website

The following messages were copied from the Timothy's Law website and the content has been changed only to protect the identity of the person who submitted the story

Parity Saves Lives and Money

Just a few words of encouragement. Several years ago, I successfully — and with the help of our statewide HMO organization — passed full parity for insurers under state jurisdiction. Later we added non-discrimination in terms of most effective psychotropics. And this year passed carveout control to hold HMO subcontractors (benefit managers) to the same standards as the contracting HMO. ***There is not one single shred of evidence that this has increased over all insurance costs of reduced the availability of coverage.*** Good luck to those fighting for fairness in New York.

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 04:54:15 PM by Connecticut [State Senate President Pro Tempore Kevin B. Sullivan](#)

My project...

Posted on April 14, 2004 at 03:40:56 PM by Erin

As someone who knows how tough it can be to navigate through the system from my own personal experience, reading Timothy's story broke my heart. Unfortunately, as we can see, sometimes it takes a tragedy like this to turn heads. I just wanted to share that I will be advocating for Timothy's Law in a letter campaign I am going to organize at Syracuse University (where I am a social work major). I am sure my fellow students will help me with this. God bless and best of luck.

Young People Please Come Forward

Posted on March 21, 2004 at 08:43:21 AM by Katie

I was at the rally on March 16 and was pleased to see that there were so many young people at the rally. At the age of 13, I began seeing a school psychologist every week. By the time I was 15, I already overdosed once, and was placed by the county Child Welfare Department into a Residential Treatment Facility. My mom was forced to give up custody of me, even though she was not abusive. The story goes on from there..an adolescent inpatient stay, another Residential Treatment Facility and finally the adult mental health system at the age of 18.

For me, 18 was about 20 years ago, but for young people, who have, or have not been placed in treatment facilities, their voice needs to be heard by the senators in Albany.

I am calling out all young people, to come forward and speak to the media, to Tom O'Clair and the legislators. Let's make sure that this law gets passed and that the young people of today, do not have to live through the experiences of many of us who are now in their 30's and 40's.

Rally

Posted on March 16, 2004 at 07:17:27 PM by anonymous

I went to the rally today and I totally agree with everything that was said at the rally. I was a friend of Timmy's and I went to school with him. I still remember when our guidance counselor came into my gym class first period and announced the tragedy. Everyone in the entire school was extremely affected by the news. He had so much more to live for and such a great life ahead of him. He had so many friends and so many people that cared so much about him. Sometimes people don't realize all the people that are there for them. Timmy will never be forgotten. I would do anything to help out his family with passing Timothy's Law. I think it's such a great thing to do and I give so much credit to his family and everyone else out there that is doing their best to pass this law. Today is the third year anniversary of Timothy's death. All my love and prayers are with everyone who has thought of Timmy or who knew him. He will never be forgotten and is loved by many. He is our angel watching over us! Lots of love!

WE NEED THIS- OUR CHILDREN NEED THIS

Posted on February 19, 2004 at 11:42:20 AM by Alexandra

I guess the best way to respond to this site is this: I remember what it was like to have 'been there,' I lost people in my life to suicide, and we will all continue to lose loved ones until the help that we need is made readily available.

If it had not been for people- family, friends and alike, I would not be here to support this law. My parents were there, and my family suffered financially to get me the help that I needed. It was a long battle, and a battle that still tries to surface every now and then, and a battle that I know I will be fighting for the rest of my life.

Please write your letter; please send your \$1.26. I sent mine, and it was sent in memory of Timothy RJD, CLP, and for MB (who was my insurance) Thank You.

Participation in your government and in the world around you is the only way that things will change. We need to show the people we elected that this is what WE WANT and it's what WE NEED and what WE ARE WILLING TO PAY FOR with our money, and not with our lives.

A law that needs to be passed

Posted on February 20, 2004 at 12:01:34 PM by Jennifer

I lost my husband 4 years ago to mental illness. If this law was in place 4 years ago. My husband would still be here. Send your money and write your letters.

I love you Fred-Died March 17,2000.

A single shot to the head that changed my life FOREVER. \$1.26 isn't much when it means it can change a life.

(no subject)

Posted on December 1, 2003 at 07:25:08 PM by Sharon

I just wanted to say that I am so sorry about your son and your brother. I totally agree with you that it is not fair that people have to pay so much for something they cannot help. Your son did not die in vain though. Your family has become so strong because of him. His life meant something to all of you and you are showing just how valuable his life truly was and still is.

Everyone who is put on this earth is here for a reason. No matter what the reason and everyone has something to give. Your son gave his life so that he may be able to help others.

Keep on fighting for this bill. Good luck in getting it through so everyone in the US has it not just New York.

Thank You

Posted on November 21, 2003 at 12:06:41 PM by Amanda

My name is Amanda and two years ago my boyfriend Charlie committed suicide. He was treated at a mental facility, but was soon released because of his insurance. They would only allow him to stay for a week. This law that you are trying to get passed is a great thing, not only in the memory of those who have passed, but of those who could and will be saved. You have no idea how much this means to me. Thank you again.
Sincerely- Amanda

Thanks... and finally

Posted on November 11, 2003 at 01:35:39 PM by Gretchen

Thank you so much for doing this. I am so sorry for your loss and I am so grateful that you are moving forward in such a great way. The insurance company gave me only 20 outpatient visits as well, which I quickly exhausted when I was released from the child psychiatric hospital. Since then my mother has been paying for each appointment. It is so extremely expensive, and we are lucky that my counselor once you go over 20, you pay only a certain amount. Which is so nice of them. What you are doing is amazing and I thank you for that. I wrote a letter to my Senator pleading to sign this bill. Thanks again, and good luck as well as God Bless.

I know you, and my son has the same problems

Posted on November 4, 2003 at 11:43:40 AM by Robin

Our son, now 11 has ADHD, ODD, and intermittent explosive disorder. He spent (as I am reading, the usual 8 days at 4 winds when he was nearly 6) He had attacked me and ruptured a disc in my neck. He was born "different" He had some learning delays. He was in preschool special ed. He couldn't understand others and others couldn't understand him. He had severe processing problems.

He started raging at about 1 1/2 years old. He is an explosive child Most teachers have denied he has any problems. Well now in sixth grade he averages 2 days of detention a week. He has wonderful manners, he saves his frustration and rage for home. (that is not abnormal, as most think).

He is no longer behind in anything in school. He told me he wanted to kill himself a few weeks ago.

His recent therapist and I decided that she wouldn't be able to work with him, because of the severity of his problems. He has jumped out of our car while it was moving, jumped out of his bedroom window, on and on. J. is of above average intelligence. Until this year he was dumber down. Know what that means? He was treated like he was below average. Know what that does???? Makes him under achieve. Adds to his self hatred!!!

We are fortunate we finally got Medicaid!!!!!!!!!!!!!! The older he gets , the less chance there will be of a future for him.

I am rambling , and I am sorry. I am pleased to find a group of people who are in the same boat, or similar. I will help as much as I can. I can't drive or travel far. But I will do whatever I can to help. Just send me an e-mail, or whatever . We ARE ALL in this together.

I remember...

Posted on November 2, 2003 at 11:00:24 PM by a friend of Timothy.

Seeing this site and hearing some conversation about Timothy's Law made me think about when we first started 6th grade. It was the orientation and when we got there I saw Tim and his dad. My dad said who is that and I said "That's my friend Tim." I still think of the day the counselor came into my gym class and announced what happened. I was not able to attend the wake. But I still visit the grave. He is buried feet away from my grandmother. Every time I pass the grave I think how he was so young and he had so much more to do in life. I do believe that he is watching over all of us and especially you guys, his family. I know deep down he truly cares for all of you.

Please Read ..

Posted on October 31, 2003 at 01:07:27 PM by Josh's Friend

On April 16th a close friend of mine and countless other people hanged himself in Phoenix, NY, a small town north of Syracuse. We were all devastated by the loss and continue to think of him everyday. Since this has happened MANY of the people in our neighborhood have been actively supporting Timothy's Law.

It's about time...

Posted on October 29, 2003 at 03:21:54 PM by Jennifer

I grew up in Rotterdam and graduated from Mohonasen in the early 1990's. I moved out of the area 7 years ago and am just now finding out about Timothy and his story. I should also tell you that for the past 4 years I have been teaching students who have been identified as "emotionally disturbed". My students are in grades K-2 and I can see first hand how these little children are affected by mental illness. I also see the frustration the parents have with the health care system and how it is near impossible to get children the help they need before it's too late. My students are so young and I hope that they do not have to suffer like Timothy and that by passing his law he can get the help they need. It's about time someone came forward and put themselves out there for these children. I commend Timothy's family on their brave journey.

Thanks and Understanding

Posted on October 6, 2003 at 03:30:47 PM by Anne

I wanted to thank Timothy's family for all they have done and continue to do to get help to those who need it. I have a 9 year old son who was diagnosed as bipolar (as well as other things) at the age of 7. Needless to say Timothy sounds very much like my son and so does what his family has gone through. I am currently in extensive debt due to 2 stays at Four Winds, appointments that the insurance no longer covers, etc. I lived in Schenectady until recently and the county would do nothing although I was a single mother with 2 children. I am still in the area but in a different county and hoping maybe to get some help. I have applied for SSI benefits for him, however still waiting for a hearing - 1 YEAR LATER. My thanks, support and prayers go out to Timothy's family.

If I can help...

Posted on October 7, 2003 at 04:44:57 PM by Ray

As a person with Bi Polar I know what its like to feel the insurance crunch. I am stuck with a 16,000 dollar hospital bill. If you need anything please let me know. I have written numerous politicians regarding this law...Good luck and God Bless....

Love you, support you

Posted on September 17, 2003 at 05:51:49 PM by Kathy

Hi.....I had the honor of taking part in the rally yesterday in Albany. I am a member of NAMI-MFH and a consumer of Mental Health services. As an adult, I went through something similar where I ran out of coverage, and went without meds and treatment for nearly two years. It was a difficult time for my whole family.

We as a group have been writing letters, making phone calls, wearing the buttons everywhere, etc, in an attempt to get the message, and the bill through.

god bless your family ((timmy's friend))

Posted on September 16, 2003 at 02:39:21 PM by Timmy's friend

I just wanted to say that what you are doing is a very good thing in Timmy's honor, and god bless the whole family for having to go through this and still standing strong.. I was at timmy's wake and you probably don't remember me but I met u guys. I dont know why he would walk away form a good family like you guys but I know that he's watching over all of us as we pray for him. I know he smiling down on us all. Thank you for doing this all right and helping more people who are going through stuff like this as my self, and as I read things that other people have written I know in my heart that there is hope some where out there. Thank you for giving me that hope, me and all my friends from Mohonasen and that knew him pray for your family and Timmy every nite. Thank you and god bless

Scared for my daughter

Posted on September 13, 2003 at 09:34:28 PM by Paula

My heart aches for the O'Clairs and all those who have lost someone dear to them from suicide. I'm so scared because my 19 year old daughter is currently hospitalized and being treated for severe depression and possibly being bipolar. We've been told to apply for Medicaid quickly before her benefits run out. I don't think we'll be eligible.

I have sent e-mails and letters to Senator Bruno and other legislators. I hope to participate in the walk on Tuesday to the capitol but don't know what is going to happen from day to day while we are in this crisis. Timothy's Law has my support and I will do whatever I can to help get it passed. I am telling everyone I know about it.

To Tom and Donna....Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you are doing. I am so sorry about Timothy.

My dad

Posted on September 11, 2003 at 12:54:20 PM by Rose

I just wanted to tell you about my dad. He has had mental problems since I have been alive . I am 36 yrs old. My dad has been incarcerated for the past 36 yrs of my life on & off . Right now it's on & he has been ,I call sick for quite some time now .. & everytime he goes to court they do not send him for mental help,Out of site out of mind . thats what it seems like to me . get him off the streets . don't let him live a life with his children & his grandchildren & his great grand-son.. I don't know how to help my dad . One time he was in a diabetic coma for 30 days while in prison. Now how sad is that ????? they said they thought he was sleeping for 30 days .. come on now , All i want for my dad is for himn to live his life out here with us & not die behind bars .. its just terrible how humans can treat others like this . I really can't do much for my dad.. after a judge rules on my dads life .. as for meds they didn't give him any meds till this yr ..they just thought he was /is a another native man thats drunk lock him up & get rid of the problem.. He was so sick when my brother died he didn't know how to deal with his sons's death.. Till just before he went back to jail .. & was talking about my brother to me . but he is lost now i find &

nobody but my brothers & sisters care for him.. I just am so lost right now in my life . To many deaths around me & not enough family support or reservation support .. I know how it goes when nobody wants to care

My Daughter Angelica

Posted on September 10, 2003 at 08:30:47 PM by [Randi](#)

My second born daughter Angelica Ariel died by suicide.I lived in Florida at the time and I have moved back to New York City since than. She was in her Junior year of college , going for a degeree in Social Work. She was very depressed, anxious and was suffering from panic attacks,. The system on So. Fl. failed my daughter and I lost my daughter to suicide, because nobody would try to help her end her pain. I was told much later when I saw her hospital records that she was discharged because she had no more insurance. That was a lie. She was sent to a day treatment center and became progressively worse, as she was never stabilized on any medication , and never received psychotherapy...as promised. In 3 months she had 6 suicide attempts ,the last one worked, and was given 11 different meds without being stabilized on any. She was being pressured from the Day Treatment Center to go on disability..she refused...plus we had the money to pay for her care,,...they had already been indicted for over 4 million in medicaid fraud...Angelica is forever 20..and i am forever going to be the walking wounded...and so will her surviving big and little sisters,

sincerely,

Randi

a grieving mother with a hole in my heart

Re(1): My Daughter Angelica

Posted on September 11, 2003 at 09:19:56 AM by alexis

I offer my comfort and my condolences.

Its a terrible thing how those who need help are eaiter not helped correctly or at all. I have just recently had a friend pass away from suicide. They will be forever 17. I am so sorry for your loss.

Timothys Law, will help so many when it is passed.

Wishing all the best to you and your family,

Alexis

P.S - I don't know if this will help at this time but - gardian angles are our loved ones who have joined God on the other side.

Never lose hope - it is always there

Re(5): My Daughter Angelica

Posted on September 13, 2003 at 05:55:15 PM by [Randi](#)

dear Barb,Tim, And others.,

I want to advocate for the mentally ill..I want there to be parity for mental and physical illnesses..mental illness is a physical illness..it is an imbalance in the brain chemically, and should be treated no different than diabetes..I want to help erase the stigma of mental illness and suicide..and of course i want to help prevent others from doing what my daughter did, and prevent another parent from having to pick out a casket for their child. Children are not supposed to die before their parents..especially when that death was preventable. You have me as an ally and an advocate. Only together can we make a difference.

Randi

(no subject)

Posted on September 8, 2003 at 11:15:33 AM by [anonymous](#)

May God bless the family of this boy who had so much potential. It is so sad that NY has their priorities so screwed up and they can't see what is right in front of their faces.

It took the death of a small child to have this happen. Why does the government make the whole mental health system so difficult for those who need it. If the powers that be really opened their hearts and became more empathetic to these sad stories, we wouldn't have such tragic results. Governor Pataki would never have this happen to anyone in his family....why have it happen to another family!

May God continue to bless the O'Clair family and all those who are genuinely helping this cause.

Treatment

Posted on July 18, 2003 at 07:26:25 AM by [Pat](#)

Dear O'Clair Family.

I am the mother of Kendra for whom AOT in NYS, "Kendra's Law" is named. I first of all offer my condolences to the family on the devastating loss of Timothy. I will be speaking in Brooklyn next week and want you to know that I will seek support for Timothy's Law at the end of my talk. My daughter is a CSW in Buffalo, NY. She knows firsthand how insurance (lack of) interrupts treatment. I wish you every success, it is a big hurdle and one so needed at this time. Sincerely, Pat Webdale

(no subject)

Posted on July 12, 2003 at 07:24:12 PM by Anonymous

My heart goes out to you and your family.

We also had a problem with enough coverage. Our private health insurance only covered 10 days inpatient mental health care! My daughter needed a longer stay at the hospital. The social worker at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Manhattan told me about getting my daughter on Medicaid under the "Katie Beckett" bill.

I'm forever grateful for this information and pass it along to other parents. Our family income was not part of the assessment.

God bless this family!!

Posted on June 23, 2003 at 05:15:20 PM by [Kanda](#)

I can't express how much I admire what this family is doing, there is something very wonderful about taking your pain and using it to help others. I myself have a son going through the same process, almost exactly the same. He is in a RTC right now and only because we gave DSS temporary custody of him, because we couldn't afford the service ourselves and our insurance would also only cover 30 days. I am currently trying to set up a service for my community to help other families with the same situation that are stuck with knowing which way to turn.

Re(1): Please Help Timothy's Law

Posted on July 4, 2003 at 01:56:33 PM by TD

I stumbled upon this site while browsing the NYS NAMI web site. My insurance covers 50% of my psychiatrist visits, which adds up to \$60/session. I can only afford to go about 2x/month, so I've turned to searching the web to try to find ways to treat myself. Unfortunately, I also turn to alcohol to self-medicate during particularly hard times. I wish I could help you by going public with my story, but due to the stigma attached to mental illness, I know I'd be putting my job in jeopardy. I want to get well so badly and I can't because of money. Please continue to fight for Timothy's Law. It is my only hope for a "normal" life.

I KNOW your PAIN!!

Posted on June 17, 2003 at 11:01:49 PM by [Crys](#)

First I would like to offer my deepest sympathy to Timothy's family - I DO understand. My sister read your story in a local news paper - two days after I buried my only daughter! My daughter, Amy, was a vibrant and beautiful 28 year old mother of four. For the past three years she has been battling Bipolar and she ended the battle on June 2nd of 2003. My pain is still very raw, but I felt that I had to respond to your article. Like you, I tried desperately to get medical help for Amy. Everywhere I turned was a dead end. The community Mental Health services told me that she had excellent insurance - what a joke!! She had a 50% co-pay for therapy, psychiatrists and hospitalization. And there was a \$30,000 cap for lifetime treatment!! Not only could we not get any help - but the Medical facilities hounded my daughter constantly about her debts.

Amy attempted suicide on at least five occasions. In February of this year, she drank - parked on the railroad tracks - and was hit by a train. After this incident, I tried to get her deemed incompetent, but the hospital psychiatrists said that she was very competent - I just don't understand!!!! Isn't Mental illness the same as any other illness??? There are PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES that AFFECT the mind. Isn't this the same as Alzheimers?? How can society just look the other way - I know that before my daughter was diagnosed, I knew nothing about Bipolar. I know now that it is very hereditary. I fear for my 12 year old son who is showing signs of depression and has been diagnosed with ADHD and ODD- and like you we are limited to 20 visits per year. I know that Timothy's Law is to benefit the people of New York - but something must be done about this NATION WIDE. I am from Michigan and I would really like the benefit of your knowledge. I want to get a law like this one passed in Michigan too. We need to get our stories out to stop this senseless loss!! Please Please Please if there is any way you could steer me in the right direction I would be eternally grateful. Sincerely,
Devastated in Michigan

Re(3): I KNOW your PAIN!!

Posted on June 25, 2003 at 11:48:27 PM by Lynn

Crystal,

I am a 36 year-old mother of 3 with severe chronic depression and bipolar. I have been through the pain that your daughter has with the illness and the problems associated with it. I also have several medical bills the most recent \$10,000.00 in the past 2 months. My husband makes too much money to qualify for any help although we can not afford to pay all of the medical bills. "They" say we also have good insurance but I only get 12 outpatient and 20 inpatient visits a year. I am located in Iowa and have also been in contact with NAMI in my area with no help. I work with other adults with mental illness and have been to the conventions and other gatherings with no new ideas. I would also like to know how to get 'Timothy's Law' passed in my state. Until then I put up with the phone calls the best I can as I also deal with my illness. I don't know your pain as I have not experienced your side but I do know your daughters pain. Please know that you and the rest of your family are not at fault and did the best you could to help her because you love her very much and believe me she knows it. God bless you and your family. Lynn

Re(5): I KNOW your PAIN!!

Posted on July 1, 2003 at 11:42:40 AM by [Lynn](#)

Crystal,

Thank you for your reply. I am continuing to fight my illness every day as I have for the last 20 years. Please let your granddaughters know every day that their mommy loved them more than anything in the world and that they did nothing wrong, they didn't make their mommy sick. I read what you plan to put on Amy's stone and got chills when I read it. It is perfect. And to further memorialize your daughter please continue to fight for the illness that she could not over-

come. To not be able to afford the care that we with these illnesses deal with daily (and I agree with you on the use of the word mental) is not a good reason, or any reason at all, to not be able to find resources to help us. The government helps so many people with other problems from housing to medical insurance (if you qualify) there is no excuse for them not to help with mental illness when we can no longer afford to pay the costly hospital and doctor bills. If they are not willing to do that then they need to pass it on to the insurance companies and give equal rights to mental illness as they do to other physical afflictions. It makes me so angry when I receive another medical bill that I know I am not going to be able to pay. (which now since I wrote last is up to \$15000 in the past 3 months, and that is just my portion) I appreciate your courage and ongoing struggle with the grief of your loss. I also commend you on continuing to fight for the cause! If we stick together we can beat this. Please let me know if I can help you in understanding what your daughter has gone through. I don't know everything about bipolar but I know what it does to me and how I feel on a daily basis. I don't want your questions (or anyone else's) to go unanswered.
God bless you, Lynn

Your strength inspires...

Posted on June 17, 2003 at 10:32:01 PM by [David](#)

I want to wish your family continued success in your efforts with Timothy's Law. When I first heard what your family was taking on, it made me feel both proud and sad. Proud to have worked with Tim, even if for a brief while, and sad to know what drastic circumstances had to take place for all of these positive changes to begin. I always knew that Tim would remain in my heart, now he will be in many others. God Bless

Reminds me of Tim

Posted on June 13, 2003 at 06:34:25 PM by [Kayla](#)

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children...to leave the world a better place...to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

because he has lived... and passed... things will be changed to make things better for others.
Thanks Tim, and to his family for making the world better for the rest of us

I lost my son too

Posted on June 13, 2003 at 02:08:00 PM by [Donna](#)

I just sent an email to Mr. Bruno to help get Timothy's Law passed THIS YEAR. I told him my story. Here it is.

My son Eric was "lost" in the mental health system. He spent years being mis-diagnosed, from ADD to "just bored" to genius IQ, to dependent on pot, to clinical depression, and just recently this past November, after a "too-brief" hospital stay, schizophrenia. Months before this diagnosis

he tried to get help thru a local mental health agency (because he had no insurance) and was told there was a 4-month waiting list. Right before his stay, he tried to admit himself into the hospital because he felt if he didn't he'd "be dead within a matter of months". They turned him away because he had no insurance. After he told me about the "voices" he was hearing, and that he couldn't control them anymore, I tried desperately to get him help. Eventually calling in a Mental Health Order to have the police bring him to the hospital. Then they HAD to treat him! But because of insurance he was released 5 days later, placed into "emergency housing" (he was "afraid" of our house), which consisted of some crappy motel room. He was put on social services, medicaid, given counseling appointments, and put on two meds. On January 24, 2003 I had a police officer come into where I work to inform me that my son committed suicide by hanging himself in his motel room. Do I think the system could have done better by him??? Absolutely!!! Do I think they believe these kids are "expendable"? Absolutely!!! When I read the autopsy report (which no mother should ever have to read) the doctor who was "assigned" to his case thru mental health agency listed his condition as "worsening" and that he was hearing more voices. After speaking to the doctors at the hospital where he stayed (off the record of course) they questioned if he was getting worse, why wasn't he sent back thru ER to be re-evaluated???? Good question!!! Another good question...do you think that someone who has just been diagnosed with schizophrenia should be placed (or should I say "isolated") in some crappy motel room? Shouldn't they be placed in a group-home type atmosphere where people just like him could teach him how to LIVE with a mental illness, instead of DYING because of it??????? Where there would be counseling and someone with him 24/7? Here we finally thought, with the right diagnosis, we could get him on level ground. We got him to the help. And yet, he still was dead "within a matter of months".

I've joined a support group for Parents of Suicide and am shocked at the amount of people going thru similar situations. Its a comfort to talk to people who truly understand the devastation that suicide causes.

I hope this law gets passed, and that maybe lives will be saved because of it, and less families will have to deal with such a loss. I know personally that I will never be the same person I was when my son was here with me.

Why are kids with mental health issues treated any differently than someone with cancer or diabetes? It doesn't make sense. And until things get changed, more innocent lives will be lost. My son didn't ASK for the pain he was in. He did ASK for help.

Its been 20 weeks today that my son took his life. I remember last June, when we celebrated his 21st birthday, I said to him "see...that wasn't so bad!" Man, it was a struggle. What I DIDN'T know was that he would remain forever 21. Too sad to bear.

Thank you for listening. and good luck!

Donna

Eric's Mom

6/24/81 - 1/24/03

Re(1): I lost my son too

Posted on June 14, 2003 at 00:11:10 AM by [robert](#)

dear donna i just got done reading your article and for the first time in a while the thought of my experience with depression crossed my mind. it is so hard to express words of comfort in such a situation. me knowing what it was like and to have to battle each second of your life, wondering what is wrong or why me is a lot for any individual to sustain. the only comfort is knowing that Brian is no longer suffering, and believe me i would rather not be here then to have to live another day with depression.

Timothy's Law & Federal Workers

Posted on June 13, 2003 at 12:46:30 PM by [Ginette](#)

Hello, I've just read about the loss of your son, Timothy & the efforts you have put forth to pass Timothy's Law in your state. I first want to say that my heart and prayers go out to you and I commend you for your remarkable strength. The story struck a chord in me, not only as it would any parent, but especially because my son has ADHD and we've had such a hard time with insurance companies giving us the run around & trying to limit our access to the mental health professionals we need. As a federal worker, we have a limited choice of health insurers we can choose from. We became so frustrated with the HMO's, that this year we have tried a PPO plan. Unfortunately, its not better when it comes to mental health. Even though we are supposed to have "parity" I believe, we don't. The insurer has another company that provides mental health coverage. It still limits the amount of visits they cover at a time and the worst is each family member has \$750 deductible for mental health benefits which is more than twice as much as, and seperate from the deductible we pay for our physical health needs. I have depression, so the costs between Charlie and me for medicines and therapy has been substantial. Fortunately, we are in a position to be able to absorb these costs without too much difficulty, but I still think it is discriminatory that members of a health plan should have a seperate deductible for mental health benefits. We know now that mental illnesses like ADHD and depression are the result of chemical imbalances in the brain - how and why this be distinguished from our physical health needs? I'd appreciate any advice you may have on how I can begin to address this issue with my employer (the Federal Government). Right now our son is doing well with the medicine he takes and the behavior modification techniques we employ. He sees a psychiatrist and psychologist, and has an excellent pediatrician. However, since depression runs in my family, I often wonder what the future, especially adolescence, may hold for him. I want to be prepared as possible should other mental illnesses surface, so we can continue to try to give him all the best treatment and care that is available. Thank you, Ginette

HMOs Hind Behind "Policies"

Posted on June 11, 2003 at 08:50:49 AM by [Ellie](#)

I've been in the unfortunate position to experience both HMO Administration as well as be denied the mental health care my child requires. I served on the Appeals Committee when I worked for an HMO - and it is NOT always the administrators who deny coverage for Appeals.

HOWEVER my current HMO (not the one I worked for) says that, in the history of the organization, no one has EVER received even one additional visit after an appeal!

There is definitely discrimination against Mental Illness coverage - and, when it comes to children especially, this is just criminal!

Michael

Posted on June 11, 2003 at 04:42:33 AM by [kim](#)

I watched the Today show this morning and saw the story about Timothy's law. I was very frightened and saddened by your family's story. Yesterday I took my 6 year old son to live in a residential facility here in Illinois and had a very tearful night. He has been in and out of a children's psychiatric facility for 7 months out of the last year. I am the mother of 5 children an 11 yr old boy with adhd and depression, 6 yr old triplet boys (Michael is one of them) who were born at 26 weeks gestation and each have a disability, and a 4 yr old girl who is so genuinely kind to her mentally ill brother, kind in a way she shouldn't have to know at such a young age. I have been seeking help for Michael since he was two. Most doctors just wanted to give me some anxiety meds because they thought I was just overwhelmed and Michael was just hyper. I then began videotaping Michael's rages and taking pictures of the injuries he would inflict on us, the other children, and himself so if doctors thought I was exaggerating about his problems I could show them the tape. Finally at the age of five, after he pushed one of the other boys and gave him a skull fracture drs began to listen. To make a long story short, we were lucky enough to qualify for medicaid in Illinois because our private ins' mental health benefits had been exhausted and with a family of seven our income was low enough (mainly because my husband missed so much work due to Michael's needs) At the onset of his more intensive treatment when residential care was suggested, I said I would never do it, but when I watched Michael suffer with this intensive anxiety and struggle with the voices he says are in his head that tell him to hurt himself, I knew he needed more extensive long term treatment and structure than we could provide him at home. I applied for an Individual Care Grant in Il, he was first denied because he was not "mentally ill enough", but as he continued to deteriorate we applied again and he got it, so residential care was possible. His diagnosis is schizo-affective disorder. It is very unusual for a child of this age to get a ICG and to receive this diagnosis but we progressed to here. He was given every other more typical diagnosis but he didn't real fit the criteria, this one fits his symptoms and behaviors perfectly. Unfortunately, he only responds minimally to meds.

It is sad to think of him having cancer or some other terminal illness, but if he did insurance-wise there would be no question of his ins coverage. This is a life long illness, like diabetes, it needs to be treated continually and with diligence. It needs to be monitored and the patient and his/her family need to be educated about the best treatment and to know the warning signs of the condition getting more serious and life threatening. It seems outrageous that one condition is treated like an illness and one is treated like a choice. Michael did not choose this path and we did not choose it for him. He comes from a loving home where he was not abused, where his parents have been advocating for the best care for him from day one.

His residential facility is one of the top 3 in the Midwest with strong family involvement, it gives us great hope that one day soon, we hope, he can be back in our home and be able to be safe and be a child and enjoy child like things. People can judge the decisions of parents with severely mentally ill children, or they can look at their own children, say a pray of gratitude and remember how joyful it can be to be a child and every child deserves that opportunity to experience that simple joy.

To the O'Clair family...Thank you for being a strong voice for all mentally ill children and their families. If this law becomes a national debate which it should I am very willing to be a voice for change in my state. It shouldn't be this difficult to save the life of a child!!

Divorce to access services

Posted on June 11, 2003 at 01:20:17 AM by [Pam](#)

I can't believe what was suggested to my husband and I tonight at a mental illness meeting regarding getting services for our mentally ill son. The lady suggested my husband and i get divorced!! That way I'd be a single parent and better qualified to access the services my son needed. Right now, my husband just makes enough money that we dont' qualify for services! I know you guys were forced to sign papers so Timothy could get services from the state. Now out here in Arizona, they're recommending parents get divorced so mentally ill kids get services. What a wacky world this is!!

As parents you are models..

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 08:22:23 PM by [Janet](#)

Hi,
I've read in the newspapers and the CABF site of your continuing efforts for passage of appropriate insurance coverage...that you as parents and Timothy were not afforded...and after your huge loss..you continue to advocate for what is fair but so misunderstood.
I live with it daily, my 10 yo, MOOD to rule out BP, ADHD and ODD..and no one understands. I wish he were in a wheelchair...an awful thought but then perhaps those around us would understand. Instead it is viewed as not a chemical imbalance but rather a choice. He has no choice and neither do I as I parent him.

Insurance carriers, as society, views it as willful and with purpose behavior.
We as parents know all too differently.

God Bless you for your efforts. I feel your pain and loss because my "Mitchell" is very much like your "Timothy".
Take care.

We've just started scratching the surface...

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 06:54:21 PM by [Dayna](#)

My son was recently diagnosed as ADHD. It has been a long 2 years from the first moment I took notice that something wasn't "easy" with him. He was always getting into trouble and aggressive. In preschool I asked his teacher if she thought that he may be ADHD, she said she didn't think so. I continued to question his behavior and grew increasingly frustrated. My little boy was a monster. I really got concerned when I began hearing, really hearing him talk bad about himself. He felt that he was bad and "no good". We got through preschool and then took on the task of kindergarten. He struggled daily, crying every morning when getting dropped off but never telling me he didn't want to go to school. His grades were being greatly affected and the teachers were having such a hard time with him that I would get phone calls at work. We got through the winter break and going back to school was like the first day of school when he started in the fall. It was miserable. He still wasn't learning his lessons and I was scared. I finally "requested" that his pediatrician refer us to a child psychiatrist, the pediatrician felt that "he's fine", I told her "NO! He's not fine" we need to see a psychiatrist. She reluctantly referred us and from there we started the procedure to diagnose him. We've all come a long way, he's doing much better now, but I do realize how costly it'll be. At the start of his sessions, which was 4 months ago, co-payment portions were minimal, I recently received a current statement in the mail just the other day, it's up to a hundred some dollars. His medication isn't that much, our co-payment is small, it's the office visits that creates the hardship, being we go often to do a "med-check". Our medical insurance covers a percentage but I'm not too sure if they're based on the number of visits, etc.

I read Timothy's story and my eyes welled with tears. My Travis doesn't show signs of being suicidal, although, we've only begun to scratch the surface...

Pray this passes

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 06:53:34 PM by [Diane](#)

Like Timothy's family, I also wished my son had cancer rather than depression. Both are so extremely painful, both can kill you but some cancers can be cured. There is no cure for depression. It's always lurking. A local child with cancer went to Hawaii with her family thanks to the make a wish foundation. My son went to a psychiatric hospital for 4 months and then came home. Home for how long we don't know. How long will he live? We don't know. He's only 17 and has tried to end his life twice. I pray Timothy's law passes. There is no cure for his illness.

My Son

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 05:55:34 PM by [Julie](#)

My prayers are with you and I hope you get this passed. My son is 12 and has been diagnosed with ADHD, ODD and Depression. He is on Medicaid, as his father passed away 6 months ago. But before that we too, suffered the 10 visits and then get reapproved if possible. He has threat-

ened to kill himself on many occasions and I still fear that one day he will. Right now he is in counseling with a wonderful psychologist twice a month, plus a hospice counselor twice a month (due to his father's death).

Good Luck and I am praying for your family for healing.

Wishful!!

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 04:06:02 PM by anonymous

I watched the Today show in horror this morning! I cannot believe a family would have to go to such lengths to keep their own flesh and blood alive, however, I understand the desperation! We too went through this 2 years ago with our son. Thank God, our insurance company was able to help us with everything but co-payments! I wish people knew how devastating this is for families to deal with. I took one family medical leave and 4 months after it ended, it was decided that another was needed. In the meantime, new management took over the company I worked for and after 15 years of dedicated employment, I was let go! I know in my heart it was due to the time off I had to have to deal with my son, but as it turned out, it was the best thing that could have happened to us. He is ALIVE and thriving! No longer on medications, still not a day goes by that I don't worry that this could some day creep back into our lives. I pray for all the families that are going through this. People that are uninformed have no idea what this is like! KEEP FIGHTING!!!!

Re(1): Today show

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 05:35:41 PM by [Martha](#)

I also saw the today show and it hit home. I have a daughter with similar problems and we have been struggling with medications and insurance for years. Residential Treatment has been recommended but the Insurance Company won't cover it. My heart goes out to Timothy's family and this law needs to be passed in all states.

Re(2): Today show

Posted on June 14, 2003 at 01:49:00 PM by [Cyndi](#)

I saw the Today show and your story hit me so hard it took until today to check out your site. I have a 17 yr old daughter that I have been struggling with her mental illness since she was 13. Her father and I are divorced (since 1994), and he has been fighting me every step or the way. I had to give custody of her to the state to get her the help that she needed. I spent many nights crying myself to sleep over that decision. I thank GOD for the stories that I have read here today. Thank You ALL for letting me know that I am NOT the only parent facing these problems.

Question for Colorado

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 01:42:14 PM by [Kanda](#)

I can't express how much I admire what this family is doing, there is something very wonderful about taking your pain and using it to help others. I myself have a son going through the same process, almost exactly the same. He is in a RTC right now and only because we gave DSS temporary custody of him, because we couldn't afford the service ourselves and our insurance would also only cover 30 days.

22 yrs

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 12:19:14 PM by [elizabeth](#)

My son, Louie, is now 22 yrs old. This weekend, I had to have a restraining order enforced by Las Vegas Metro police against him. I hung in there as long as I could, letting him, his girlfriend and my granddaughter stay with me. But his attitude towards me and anyone else in authority had gotten to the point of unbearable. He can be a great guy, but his anger towards anyone in authority, and especially his disrespect for women, sent me to this point. I had taken him to therapy since he was 5, when he pushed his kindergarten teacher off her heels and was expelled! I was okay as long as I had medicaid. Private insurance never covered long enough for him to get the help he needed. Now his mental health care is up to him- I can't force him to get the help he so desperately needs. God help his girlfriend and my granddaughter. I can't be the buffer between them now that they don't live here anymore. All I can do is pray for all three of them- the girls for their safety, my son for his sanity.

daughter just one step behind Timothy in Texas

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 11:49:03 AM by [Scherrrie](#)

I feel like my daughter is just one step behind Timothy. We have been fighting with our insurance since Feb. to pay for in patient treatment. They say that there is no medical need however, 3 psy. said she was a threat to herself and to others if she did not get in patient treatment immediately. Now they are saying that since we just got certification from the insurance company (Blue Cross) and not from the mental health provider (Megellan) that it is our fault and they can't change their decision. As a result, we are out thousands of dollars and almost bankrupt to keep her and others safe. We are behind now in our payment for her treatment so we don't know how much longer they will keep her. It breaks my heart for Timothy's parents and of course for myself and my daughter. What can we do?

God Bless you

It Happened to Me

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 11:28:29 by aimee

In my late teen years my problems became too hard to hide anymore and I broke, needing hospitalization. My medical bills currently — copayments only — are more than I can afford. I am often selling belongings to buy my meds for the month or to pay for sessions when my allowance has run out. California needs a law, too.

I understand

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 10:27:32 AM by Kristin

My husband has been battling bipolar illness and addiction for 5 years and most seriously for 9 months. He has periods where he is very suicidal and the hospitals will only keep him a few days and then insurance says enough and he is sent home to me who does not know how to deal with this. We have just recently separated because of his substance abuse which he is also not getting help for. Some of the responsibility for help lies on his shoulders, but I feel that the insurance companies are also not doing their part. In order to stay alive he needs intensive treatment which should be covered under insurance just like a person with cancer would need intensive treatment to stay alive and insurance covers that! We were paying as high as \$90.00 a week in copays and the insurance company was not even paying half of that. I have tried to fight this discrimination with the insurance company to no avail! I cannot understand how this blatant discrimination can be allowed to take place. I was appalled at the comments made on the today show by the man who said how much it would cost to cover mental health. Tell me that he would be saying the same thing if the issue were cancer or AIDS - why is mental health any different.

Timothy's Law

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 10:17:24 AM by [Tawny](#)

My nephew too hung himself. He suffered 10+ years from BiPolar Manic Depression. It began when he was 21 and ended when he was 31. What a shock to our entire family. As I scurried around to get to work this morning, I caught Timothy's Story on the Today Show and stopped dead in my tracks! Tears came to my eyes as I remembered my nephew. The system failed him! There wasn't any decent professional help for him and no funds to provide that help. We MUST continue to contact our legislators—nationwide—to pass bills so that our children, young and old, will get the help they so desperately need, whether they have the funds to do so or not! My heart goes out to Timothy's entire family.

understanding

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 10:14:45 AM by [Diane](#)

My heart goes out to your family. I am 36 years old and have been fighting with depression most of my life. My son was diagnosed last year with major depression also. He has been hospitalized twice for suicidal ideations and has been in three day treatment programs. We are fight-

ing with our insurance company to cover the last six-week day treatment program he attended. He is still struggling. Christopher - I know what you are experiencing. I also lost a brother to suicide about five years ago. He fought with mental illness most of his life. He was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. He was hospitalized most of his adult life. While we were growing up, my widowed mother of five children could not afford the care that he needed and he went untreated for too long. By the time he was diagnosed, it was very difficult to treat. You are very brave. My heart goes out to you. Keep fighting!! You will heal, but it does take time. Take care of yourself, that's what Timothy would want. I will keep you and your family in my prayers.

Re(1): understanding

Posted on October 16, 2003 at 01:06:18 AM by [Christopher](#)

I am a 21 year old who was diagnosed with major depression secondary to my physical disability. I know how devastating this illness is. It absolutely needs to be given the same coverage as a "regular" medical condition.

I see this all the time and it has to stop for the sake of our children.

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 10:10:35 AM by [Sharon](#)

As a professional counselor, I see hurting and depressed individuals not get the care they need due to lack of money and insurance companies unwilling to give them a break. I professionally know of individuals who have been able to overcome with consistent, professional counseling and are now functioning adults who have not had to seek in-patient treatment for years. My heart goes out to the parents whom have lost a child due to mental illness.

depression

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 10:07:17 AM by [Chris](#)

I saw the story on the Today Show. I can totally sympathize. My husband has been dealing with clinical depression for many years. He was diagnosed only two years ago and is self-employed. He can not get any health insurance at all because of his condition. So, not only is his mental health at risk; but his physical health as well. Please let me know what I could do to help with this situation.

Thank You.

The same thing happened to ME!

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 09:41:31 AM by [Shelly](#)

I am a 19 year old right now, attending LSU studying Psychology. One of the reasons, is to help adolescents who went through the same thing as myself. When I saw this story on MSNBC I couldn't believe it! I love to get involved with political events in which I have extreme passion for. I already am involved in the Serria Club, and this is going to be my next project. I was diag-

nosed with Bi Polar Disorder when I was 14, and have been hospitalized twice. My medicines are at \$150 right now, even WITH Insurance. I'm not in regular therapy, it only pays for two weeks, and I am a poor college student! Well, I just wanted to let everybody know that I have full support behind it. Good luck to all, and many prayers for the cause.

thank you!

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 09:36:10 AM by [erin](#)

thank you for starting this campaign. as someone who has suffered from mental illness for nearly 10 years (anxiety and depression), i too believe that mental health coverage is less than adequate. mental health is JUST as important as physical health and the two are so closely linked sometimes that it just makes sense that they should have equal coverage.

so many people suffer with mental illness and it's unfortunate that it has such a negative connotation to it. people don't look down on those with diabetes, but some do upon those with mental illness. for some/most, mental illness is a chemical imbalance and can be well treated with medication and therapy, however though some coverage is available with some health insurance policies, often, it's not enough. thank you so much for your courageous fight and sharing your story with the world. i am so sorry to hear about your son.

Im heartbroken

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 08:56:21 AM by [Jennifer](#)

I really can't express enough the sympathy I have for the O'Clair family. My younger brother was diagnosed with ADHD as a young child, around the age of 4. A few years later he was showing severe signs of depression and excessive anger. Living with him was not easy but I love him so much that all we really wanted was the best for him. Things got worse as he got older and his temper and depression were at a heightened level. He had been seeing many doctors his whole life but still his condition was severe. At the age of ten he attempted to hang himself in his bedroom, luckily he did not physically hurt himself too bad but the emotional pain he felt was bad enough. My parents admitted him to a local hospital where he stayed in the mental health facility for a week or so. Since then things have improved but his personal struggle continues day to day. He is now 14 and I love him so much that I couldn't imagine life without him. I am so sorry for your loss. Just months ago I lost a friend to suicide who also had severe depression and his family didn't seem to try and help at all when he was alive. It hurts so bad inside to see these things happen right in front of you, many times I've asked "how could anyone just not do anything about it?" I'm so glad you are. My Deepest sympathy and love is sent out to your whole family. Thank you for making a difference.

The same thing happened to my son

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 08:55:55 AM by [April](#)

The same thing happened to my son. Daniel was dx'd with ADHD and ODD when he was approximately 9 yrs old. We could not get the PROPER care for the proper length of time that

he needed it so fortunately we were able to use my ex husband's income to pay CASH for the precious gift of competent mental health care.

Despite all that was done, however, when Daniel turned 18 he got worse and just ten days before his 19th birthday he shot and killed himself on August 30, 2000.

Almost 34 months later, I am still trying to put my own life back together again.

The O'Clairs are to be applauded for working so hard to pass this bill. Please let me know what I can do to help. God bless you and your family as you struggle through your own grief as you reach out to help others.

Today Show Interview

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 08:50:07 AM by [Michele](#)

I just wanted to let the O'Clair family know that you have my family's 100% support with Timothy's Law. I just saw the interview that was on the Today show and we can relate to what your family has faced. Although our situation was with an adult family member with mental illness, it has been rearing it's ugly head for 20+ years. In September 2001, my sister in law moved to her brothers home after living with my husband (her brother) and our family after attempting suicide. At this point we have lost count as to how many times she had attempted suicide with no help from her insurance company. The latest ordeal began in June of 2001 when she was Baker Acted for 3 days for attempted suicide. That was the first of 4 Baker Act's in 5 weeks time. The 5th Baker Act was only after she cut herself so badly she had to have multiple surgeries and spend 3 weeks in the hospital. All the time, our family was trying everything we could to get her better mental health care. She has Veteran's government insurance and spent one week in a VA Hospital on the mental health floor. It is appalling to our family how the men and women that fought for our country are treated when faced with mental health issues. After one week we were told the insurance company wouldn't pay any longer because she "wasn't completely insane". At this time is when she came to live with my family. We had no room for her, but at this point, her husband was at his wits end and couldn't handle her any longer. We were able to get her medicine regulated and taken complete control of her meds as this was one part of her mental problems was meds overdosing. She seemed to be doing ok for a few weeks, but began abusing the meds again after she had went to her home to pick up some other clothes and brought back meds she had hidden. That is when we had to send her to her other brothers home in another state as we have a child to protect as well. She arrived at her brothers on Saturday, Sept. 1st and killed herself on Thursday, Sept. 6th. Our family knows that with better Mental Health coverage, she would still be with us today, possibly as a happy, healthy adult that can function in everyday life. Although we haven't went to the lengths you have to make the government look into this national problem deeper and understand it in detail, we commend you on what you have done and the hurdles you have already crossed. You will be in our prayers daily and may God Bless you and your family and daily give you comfort.

my daughter

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 08:31:20 AM by [susan](#)

i jusrt wanted to send a message that i to have a child suffering from the same disorders.i also have been having trouble with the insurance companys paying for her mental health care cover-age long term.i live in ohio,columbus.they use to have a place several years ago but say they couldn't keep paying because of the insurance.

saw Today show

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 08:30:24 AM by [Mike](#)

I can't believe anyone at this time with the knowledge we now have about the different mental illnesses could EVER find a reasone to explain away covering these costs. All I heard on the TV this morning was an insurance guy worried aout money. MONEY! My entire childhood was spent wanting to be dead. No one listened. I was just looking for "attention". After finally trying and failingeven to kill myself right I am 41 years old on 8 diferent medications and no happier. How much better of might I be if I got treatment at 10 ibnstead of 33? How much cost have I incurred various agencies for my self destruction as well as outward aggression? MONEY! y heart goesout to this family. And To Timothy. Sick....brave...confused....scared. God bless him.

Keep up the fight!

Posted on June 10, 2003 at 08:30:16 AM by [Trudi](#)

Praise God, that you are taking this issue to the legislative level! We have a son diagnosed with PDD (the diagnosis that covers anything) and constantly have to evaluate the level of care we get vs. what we could get if the insurance companies were not involved. We are very fortunate that in Connecticut, the Department of Families and Children allows for families to open cases on their own children - provided the need is critical. We have been able, because of the state DCF program, to get some services that no amount of money could buy. From the interview on the Today showe, we can see some of the difficulty you have faced and thank you so very much for continuing to make this point about poor insurance coverage for mental health.

God Bless the OClair family!

Posted on June 8, 2003 at 10:54:19 PM by [Joanna](#)

I learned of your family's situation through our local newspaper just today. I want to personally thank your entire family for making your difficult situation public. By doing so you are paving a path for those of us suffering with mental illnesses to not be discriminated against by insurance companies.....therefore you are giving us hope. Not only have I dealt with mental illness personally, but now my son is facing similliar circumstances that Timothy went through. I just want your family to know that my thoughts and prayers are with you and I want to personally thank you for the work you are continuing to do. I wish I could hug each one of you!

Timmy...

Posted on June 5, 2003 at 09:53:05 PM by [Kayla](#)

After hearing about Tim's death in my 8th grade science class i was devastated. I had just seen him on the bus the day before... it had been a long time since i had talked to Tim, or seen him (I live down the street from the O'Clairs). When i saw his picture on the 11:00 news, i became interested. No one had talked about his death since. I was Greatful for what his family has done as far as getting laws passed. I too, suffer from depression. i have stayed at Ellis, where Timothy was, and i have been in treatment for over 4 years. I have the same coverage as tim. I wanted to let his family know that Tim's death, though tragic, may save other lives... maybe even mine.

My Child?

Posted on May 31, 2003 at 06:12:33 PM by [Linda](#)

I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. O'Clair on the Fox News Channel. I thought, "oh my gosh, they're talking about OUR son!" I honestly know the emotions, feelings, anger, frustration, disappointments and everything that goes with having a child with these diagnosis. Our son has the exact same diagnosis. Thank God, my Ex-husband has excellent insurance. Yes, he's my Ex-husband, and we ALL get along like one BIG family. His new wife, my new husband and our 3 children. Just like you would your best friends. To honestly control a child like this you need MORE than 2 loving parents. They are VERY VERY difficult to manage on a daily basis. Going between homes has been the best thing that could happen in our situation. As our 8 year old daughter says and knows, "everything we do, depends on how Daniel is." Raising a child with these diagnosis, requires more attention from the parents than anyone can imagine. I totally understand how the O'Clairs feel and also understand why they made the DIFFICULT decisions they did! I'd be interested in conversing with them. God Bless you ALL! Linda

Re(1): My Child?

Posted on May 31, 2003 at 09:28:53 PM by [Tammy](#)

I can completely relate to the Oclaires situation,my son is 9yrs.old.He has had behavior problems his entire life.We finally now, after many diffrent diagnoses have the right one,On-set childhood BiPolar.since his diagnoses on April 26,I have been completely dedicated to educating myself and helping my son.We have no insurance for him,and NO ONE will insure me at this point.Everyday when Im not researching,trying to find doctors who will work together,and talking with insurance companies,Im jotting down notes on his behavoir,helping him go through various rages and rapid cycling.He also has depression with anxiety,ODD,ADD,and audio hullucinations separation anxiety and night terrors.Hospitalization will be my very last resort,and when he finally gets his meds started at the end of the month,I do not know how Im going to afford quality care.If hospitalization becomes necessary,I dont know what will do-1200 dollars A day is what I can expect.Until I figure it out I will remain searching for answers.God bless Timothys family,and please keep our son Joseph in your prayers

God Bless You

Posted on May 31, 2003 at 02:12:36 PM by [The McQueen's](#)

Just happened to catch a part of Mr. O'Claire on The O'Reilly show. Our family can so very much identify with your family's situation - with exception to one huge loss - the loss of your son. We extend our deepest and sincere sympathy to all of you.. Our son/step-son has been living with much of all the same problems as your son throughout most of his life. Currently he is living in a foster care/adult living environment that has been prayed for for MANY years. It has not been an easy road to get him where he is today. And for the record, he turned 21 yesterday. His adoptive mother has been the solid rock in working the system to receive the best available care and treatment for him. Without CONSTANT monitoring and pushing and begging and crying and yelling for help in the system, however, you don't get much. I applaud your family's dedication to push and attempt to get things changed in your state. Good Luck to you

Re(1): Please don't criticize.

Posted on June 9, 2003 at 11:43:21 AM by [pat](#)

I know the pain of losing a child to suicide. I also am raising a grandchild who has been diagnosed just like Little Timmy. It is very scary. We need to wake up across America. Mental illness is not a shame any more than cancer is. I am hoping Timothy's law is passed everywhere. I appreciate people like you who go public and try to help. With empathy for all of Timmy's family and thanks



Timothy O'Clair
May 5, 1988-March 16, 2001

Pass Timothy's Law

Mental Health is a Necessity NOT a luxury

**The following organizations endorse "Timothy's Law"
S.5329 Libous (R-Binghamton) & A.8301 Tonko (D-Amsterdam)**

Statewide Organizations: Alcohol and Substance Abuse Providers of New York State, Alcoholism Council of New York State, American Mental Health Counselors Association-NYS Chapter, Association for Community Living, Association of Addiction Professionals of New York, Association of Boards of Visitors of NYS Facilities for the Mentally Disabled, Association of Halfway House Alcoholism Programs of North America, Association of NYS Youth Bureau Legislative Committee, Center for Problem Gambling, Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation, Children's Defense Fund-New York, Citizen Action of New York, Coalition for the Homeless, Compeer-New York State, Disability Advocates Inc., Families Together in New York State, Greater New York Hospital Association, Healthcare Association of New York State, Labor Assistance Professionals of New York, Medical Society of the State of New York, Mental Health Association of New York State, Mental Health Empowerment Project, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of New York State, National Association of Anorexia and Associated Disorders, National Association of Social Workers-New York State Chapter, National Organization for Women-NYS, Native American Council on Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Inc., New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, New York Society for the Deaf, New York State Academy of Family Physicians, New York State Association of Community and Residential Agencies, New York State Association of Family Service Agencies, New York State Bar Association-Health Law Section, New York State Catholic Conference, New York State Coalition for Children's Mental Health, New York State Coalition for the Aging, New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc., New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, New York State Health Care Campaign, New York State Nurses Association, New York State Occupational Therapy Association, New York State Parent Teacher Association, New York State Psychiatric Association, New York State Psychological Association, New York State Public Health Association, New York State Rehabilitation Association, New York State Society for Clinical Social Work, New York State United Teachers, PEOPLE Inc., Pharmacists Society of the State of New York, Postpartum Resource Center of New York, Inc., Resource Center for System Advocacy, RSVP Directors of New York State, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, Self-Advocacy Association of NYS, Inc., Social Work Alliance NASW-NYS, NYC and 1199 SEIU, Statewide Youth Advocacy, Supportive Housing Network of New York, UJA Federation of New York, Women's Bar Association of the State of New York *and over 200 local organizations across New York State.*