

To: Disability Rights Washington
From: Akuyea Karen Vargas, BA
Date: 07/10/2023
Re: Trueblood vs DSHS Family Impact Statement

Introduction	The ruling on July, 2023 U.S. District Court Judge Pechman, fined DSHS \$100 million for the barriers towards competency restoration. My family knows of the pain of this, type of delay. My brother, faced similar after developing mental health challenges from his service overseas in a combat zone. With PTSD and extra stressors of being in prison his symptoms worsened making him unreachable at times.
Scope	When this was brought to light in 2015, several weeks could be manageable. However, waiting months when someone is actively in a mental health crisis is hard for all.
Current Approach	Having the option as the 2018, Trueblood case where referrals can be sent out to community providers would have kept a person like my brother from the additional harm that occurred when his behaviors were managed not by professionals, but by corrections staff who placed him in solitary confinement. Seeing how the courts have decreased usage of this invaluable tool means that community, friends, and family are unable to assist in the care of our people.
Proposed Policy	First: Managing referrals for outpatient can also be aided by family driving support for certain local placement. Making those connections so as to provide backup support for care providers. Second: Not using a tool in providing specifically people of color, means that our community, churches, and other fellowships are not able to add backup for the family when emergencies arise.
Stakeholders	DSHS, DOC. Placement for my brother in solitary, did nothing to support his mental health from the additional isolation and loneliness. International human rights law regarding mental illness equates the use of solitary confinement as torture.
Conclusion	With a policy such as what is being implemented within Washington State county facilities, my family would have still been impacted by such actions. Considering it was 2007 when my family went through this, I am saddened that little has changed with regards to those most impacted by these systems.