

MORE DETAILS

Advocates for the disabled have decried the use of shock as a form of behavioral conditioning at the Judge Rotenberg Center. View disturbing video footage of a young disabled person receiving shock at Rotenberg Center [HERE](#) Due to continued pressure from disabled rights organizations, The FDA is moving towards banning the use of shock against disabled individuals. View [HERE](#). Yet we know no one should be forced to endure shock treatment.

Disturbingly, shock is making a comeback. This is the second report of involuntary shock in Minnesota that MFI received this month, and the third in general, all involving young adults.

Several weeks ago, the hospital escalated its psychiatric abuse of Charles Helmer by initiating what is known as electroconvulsive therapy or ECT at the rate of 3 shocks/per week. In a recent conversation with Charles over the phone, a MindFreedom International staff member confirmed that Charles is aware that he is still at risk for future shock and he wants the shock to stop!

Many people who are experiencing trauma, are taken to the ER where they are immediately re-traumatized by being locked up, forcibly injected, restrained, and secluded. Many powerful, psychiatric medications are known to cause suicidality, akathisia, aggression, and hostility. Many believe that shock is not only harmful but that it is used as a form of 'punishment' against psychiatric patients who resist standard 'treatment' or whose behavior is worsened by standard psychiatric drugging.

Manufacturers of shock devices gave the procedure a makeover by renaming it Electroconvulsive therapy or ECT. They say "shock has improved!" or "Today, we anesthetize patients before they are shocked!" or "We give lower voltages!" Tell that to the hundreds of people who have called DK Law Firm this year to register in a successful class action lawsuit on the basis that the ECT they received was harmful and caused them permanent brain damage.

We hope that advocates for the disabled will join MindFreedom members in decrying the use of any shock by force, including ECT, a harmful procedure which is often used in behavioral health facilities to induce compliant states involving distressed, psycho socially disabled individuals.

To date, Charles has been subjected to 20 shocks at the rate of **three shocks per week**. This was all done against the expressed objection of Charles as well as his mother and legal guardian, Anne Fuller. This week, Charles will receive a 'respite' from shock because the 180 day period of his involuntary commitment ran out. Unfortunately, Charles had another hearing last week and the outcome was not good, according to his mother. At that hearing, the main witness for the state, a psychiatrist told the judge that Charles needs another 14 shocks. His mother says, "No way!" She is willing to do whatever it takes to stop having her son subjected to shock.

Charles' mother shared that she has contacted or filed complaints with the following organizations to no avail.

American Civil Liberty Union 651-645--4097

Pacer Center 952-838-9000
Department of Justice 202-353-1555
Arc 952-920-0855
Bazelon Center 202-467-5730
Governor Tim Walz 651-201-3400
Attorney General 651-296-6196ml
Department of Human Rights 651-431-4660
Legal Rights for Disabled 612-337-0030
Ramsey police Department 651-291-1111
Adult protection
202-370-6292
Civil Rights 612-673-3012
Commission on Human Rights 323-467-4242
Amy Klobuchar 612-727-5220
Senator John Kosich 651-296-6926.
Talked to John's assistant said he'd look into this.
Wrote star Tribune.
Channel 5, 4, 9,
Called Brian Anderson Medical Board 612-548-2141.
United Nations

Charles may soon be discharged, according to his mother, but unfortunately, we know from experience that this does not necessarily mean the shock will stop.

In a little over one week, Charles will have another commitment hearing which would give the state the power to enforce any recommended treatment, including shock, even if Charles is an outpatient.

CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING UP TO CHARLES' HOSPITALIZATION

As individuals with autism can attest, sometimes major changes in the environment may precipitate great stress. And by all accounts, the family was in great distress.

Charles mother explained that her son was taken to the Emergency room of Regions Medical Training Hospital in St. Paul's, Minnesota in April during a family crisis in which toxic mold was discovered in the family's home where Charles had been living peaceably. Abatement specialists were uncovering the toxic mold when Charles began to act strangely, according to his mother.

He was rolling around in the leaves and a neighbor called the police. No arrests were made but a few days later, the family was forced to flee to a hotel for health reasons and Charles began to act strangely again. He left the hotel room wearing only a towel, and his mother, fearing for his safety, called the police for help.

Unfortunately, this time, the encounter with the law enforcement did not go so well, and Charles was taken by force to the ER. His mother had a single, face to face meeting with the treating psychiatrist at

the time of her son's admission but after that she was denied any opportunities to offer valuable ongoing input.

She was not given an opportunity to convey Charles' entire history explaining possible stresses, past traumas, strengths, her son's autism related challenges, etc. that may have contributed to his behavior leading up to his admission. Nor is she given opportunities to advocate on her son's behalf such as explaining to hospital staff how they can help her son feel safe and comforted.

Like many young adults, Charles has been experiencing some challenges as it relates to achieving greater independence. This family needs specialized and compassionate support to help Charles achieve his personal goals and move towards greater independence in the community, not trauma, drugs and shock by force!

Charles' mother was not consulted ONE TIME, either over the phone, in person, or by email by any of her son's treating psychiatrists in three entire months, even though she is his legal guardian. They literally shunned the person who has been consistently involved in this person's life for over 21 years.

Charles mother is a powerful and passionate advocate for her son but she has been shut out of the medical decision making process entirely and traumatized by her son's 'treatment' which she believes is abusive, harmful, and inhumane.

She has not been invited to any of the treatment team meetings and her repeated emails/phone calls to Charles' psychiatrists have been ignored. She was not warned of any of the documented side effects of the psychiatric drugs Charles is being given or the documented risks of brain damage from ECT. She has medical power of attorney and a judge has given her the ability to make medical decisions on behalf of her son but not once, was she consulted or informed. History shows us that psychiatry trumps the wishes of parents who are critical of skeptical of their children's psychiatric 'treatment' and this situation appears to be no exception.

From her own research, Anne is aware of the risks of ECT, the addictive and risky nature of psychiatric drugs used routinely to chemically restrain distressed individuals for the convenience of caregivers, and the stigmatizing, traumatizing, and lifelong nature of a diagnosis like schizophrenia. Often, behavior attributed to 'schizophrenia' is trauma related, and as psychiatric survivors can attest, having one's liberties taken away and being locked up can be very traumatizing, especially to someone with autism.

In Minnesota, an involuntary commitment period lasts 180 days. For six more months, the state can subject Charles to whatever psychiatric 'treatment' it deems necessary even though the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Disabled has called psychiatric drugging and shock by force a form of 'torture'.

Some of you may recall Ray Sanford, another Minnesota resident who was the subject of a previous MFI Shield campaign about ten years ago. Like Ray, Charles can continue to be shocked even if he is discharged from the Region hospital tomorrow. Since he is involuntarily committed he must comply with his court ordered treatment or suffer the consequences, even jail!

Some people, to obtain their discharge from a psychiatric hospital are coerced into signing what is known as a conditional discharge whereby they can legally be rounded up and re-hospitalized if they are if not treatment 'compliant'. Many are forced to take part in an 'assisted outpatient treatment' (AOT) program when they are discharged from a hospital, thanks to the expansion of AOT under the 'Cures Bill' promoted by some consumer advocacy organizations such as NAMI and Mental Health of America.

For this reason, we are not only asking for the immediate release of Charles, we are asking Regions Hospital and its parent company, UnitedPartners to cease and desist from shocking Charles against his will, effective immediately. We are also supporting Charles right to receive an alternative psychiatric evaluation and his right to receive services from a competent peer advocate, as well as appropriate ongoing medical support to help him to safely taper off all psychiatric medications if that is his desire. We call for an investigation into the competency of physicians and social workers at Regions hospital and demand that if needed, they receive training in supported decision making from disability experts and legal advocates.

Finally, we call for all agencies and services providers in the city of St. Paul which are mandated to serve disabled young adults, to vigorously protect the rights of Charles Helmer and offer him humane, effective services to help him achieve a full and productive life in the community without requiring that he remain compliant with abusive and harmful psychiatric interventions.

Older MFI members may recall that Ray Sanford and Elizabeth Stinson were both shocked as outpatients while living peaceably in their homes when MFI issued Shield campaigns on their behalves. If Ray or Elizabeth refused, or missed a shock appointment, a police officer would come to their house and arrest them! This situation eerily echoes the psychiatric abuse of Ray and Elizabeth.

MFI successfully stopped Ray and Elizabeth from being shocked because members like you took time to get involved. Please help us today stop Charles from being shocked. Please take the time to read the action plan below and participate in this Shield alert. Take 15 minutes, 30 minutes, as much time as you can afford to carry out one of more actions suggested below. Instructions follow which will enable you to help us protect Charles!

MindFreedom calls on all MFI Shield members, our allies and people of good will to come to Charles' assistance!