

MindFreedom International

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18 March 2009 - by CERTIFIED MAIL and FAX

Dean K. Knudson, MD
1900 Silver Lake Rd NW, #110
New Brighton, MN 55112

Re: End Ray Sandford's ongoing involuntary outpatient electroshock

Dear Dr. Knudson,

Without a release you cannot comment to me on a patient, but you can -- and have an obligation to -- receive important information related to a patient. I direct MindFreedom, an independent non-profit human rights group. This Fall, Ray Sandford (dob 1/4/54) contacted us, saying he is a patient of yours. Please place this letter into Ray's permanent medical record.

We have determined that Mr. Sandford has for months, at your order, been receiving dozens of involuntary, maintenance, outpatient electroshocks. Also, for months Mr. Sandford has consistently, clearly, and reasonably stated that he wishes the forced procedure to stop.

I bring to your attention that his main caregiver during his life, his mother Marilyn, who is a retired psychiatric registered nurse, is also publicly speaking out, pleading for your forced shock to end. You may watch both Ray and his mother speak out publicly in a free video that is now on YouTube and other locations on the Internet, begging for an end of his forced shock, see our web site for links to this. Clearly, Marilyn cares deeply about her son, and as a retired RN has special knowledge and credibility when she asks for this trauma to end.

On the video, Marilyn points out Ray is suffering increasingly severe shock-induced persistent memory problems. Clearly Ray does not want shock, and this is not his mental disability speaking: He is obviously a human being who does not want it.

You may not be familiar with the following scientific fact, but there is academic research that when involuntary electroshock is given over the wishes of a close family member who is a key caregiver (such as spouse, or in this case mother), forced shock is contra-indicated because it causes additional trauma, and breaks trust with mental health care givers for the whole family.

Clearly, Ray's forced electroshock should end immediately, and you should urgently obtain a second opinion from a licensed mental health professional approved by Ray's family. By this letter, if you do not halt Ray's forced electroshock, it is our opinion that you are engaged in gross, intentional, criminal negligence, and therefore you would not be covered by any malpractice insurance which you pay if and when you are eventually sued for the extreme trauma you are causing.

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www.MindFreedom.org
Win Human Rights in Mental Health

In addition, since this extreme abuse is not accepted medical practice, in our opinion this constitutes Medicaid fraud and we are in touch with Medicaid headquarters in Baltimore.

Please also note that as a non-governmental organization accredited by the United Nations, we have worked closely with psychiatrist Dr. Benedetto Saraceno, Director, Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence, World Health Organization, in Geneva, Switzerland. Please note that the WHO's main published legal guideline on mental health now explicitly states that involuntary electroshock over the expressed wishes of the subject should never be done, that the consent of the subject should always be obtained in 100 percent of the cases.


Please note our investigation has also determined that Ray has been denied access, by caregivers you apparently help oversee, to commonsense alternative and supplementary supports, such as a peer support home visit from the Mental Health Consumer/Survivor Network of Minnesota or visits to the Minneapolis-area Center for Independent Living for disabilities. There are studies in the mental health research literature that adding peer support, even to those diagnosed with a serious psychiatric disability, has dramatically improved outcomes.

Instead of pursuing alternatives, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, has issued a 4 March "final notice" letter via their attorney George Borer attempting to stop, futilely, the "dissemination" of the web video featuring Ray and his mother begging for his shock to end. In addition, we are in touch with licensed mental health professionals in Minnesota who are of the opinion that involuntary electroshock in such a situation is harmful to the individual, and should halt immediately. These mental health professionals are also available for consultation.

Finally, you are capable of obtaining the proper signed consent forms you require so that you can communicate with us about a patient like Ray, and I encourage you to do so. At the end of April I am flying out to Minnesota to join others in meeting with legislators, mental health advocates, and members of the public for news conferences, nonviolent protests and public education about Ray's wishes to have his involuntary electroshock end. We have a policy of civility and nonviolence, and we request the opportunity to meet with you. Even if you cannot speak about Ray, you can speak about the general policy, wisdom, ethics and efficacy of giving a patient involuntary, outpatient, ongoing electroshock over their and their family's wishes.

As Ray puts it now, "No more shock for Ray." Please consider his heartfelt request, especially in terms of your Hippocratic Oath.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Oaks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David W. Oaks, Executive Director
MindFreedom International

P.S. Information on our web site regarding Ray Sandford, including links to the online five-minute video of Ray and his mother Marilyn pleading for the forced shocks to end, are at:

www.mindfreedom.org/ray

copy: Ray and Marilyn Sandford