

Robyn Johnson - Geneva

I was removed from work by my primary care provider due to a sudden severe mental health condition that required evaluation, testing and treatment by a team of medical professionals. My former place of employment approved an unpaid 3-month medical leave of absence. I had short term and long-term policies where I was able to provide medical documentation to support the medical leave of absence from work, however there weren't any options available for me to find a psychiatrist or psychologist that could evaluate or treat my condition. I was continually given the run around, denied much needed healthcare treatment due to the lack of medical professionals willing to accept people with a Medicaid based health insurance plan. I was forced to search for my own care and faced very difficult challenges along the way. I was treated very inhumane, spoken to with such disdain and disregard that I am a human being suffering from a mental illness that I was not born with, nor did I ask for it, yet punished every moment the proper health care isn't readily provided or even available to me as I live in the Finger Lakes community of upstate NY. Several times I have been told that Psychiatrists only prescribe medication and do not evaluate or treat patients (even though I know that's not true having common sense and experience in the mental healthcare profession as a former mental health Care Manager) yet I was repeatedly told this by several different medical organizations. I was not given an option several times in selecting the level of care that was offered to me for mental health treatment and punishment for receiving treatment from a New York State licensed master social worker who had credentials to offer mental health counseling, certain supplemental insurance companies stopped providing short term disability benefits with reasons being that I was not receiving the treatment that they said I should've been in order to qualify and continue with disability benefits. Despite the medical diagnosis that my primary care provider provided that explains my medical condition and to this day I am still declared 100 percent disabled yet it took me leaving the county that I live in to seek mental emergency treatment at a walk-in clinic over 50 miles away trying to navigate my way through blindly while mentally and physically disabled. Through it all I was humiliated, stripped of my rights to have medical care for every area of illness and challenges that I am forced to endure through zero fault of my own. Falsely accused, discriminated against because I am economically challenged, physically challenged, and regionally challenged. I was recently abused and physically assaulted by a

transportation company who is contracted by the New York State Department of Health. I was forced to ride in a vehicle without my consent and permission, subjected to reckless driving and verbal abuse and later had to be transported by ambulance to the local hospital. While at the hospital I was forced to get off of the ambulance stretcher and wait in the emergency room in a cervical collar over 6 hours as the only African American person who was discriminated against because I have a history of mental illness so my injuries were second to everyone else who came there after I did. The attending physician dismissed my complaint of severe chest and neck pain. My vitals were never taken, the intake and discharge paperwork stated that they provided me with pain pills, they did not. They never put me into a treatment room, they wheeled me into a consultation room to keep me from seeing patients who came in after me be treated before me. Later after being discharged, I requested that they call to arrange transportation for me to go home through medical transportation, the hospital refused and I was forced to walk home on January 05, 2023 in 30 degree weather only wearing very short shorts and flip flops at :30pm at night alone with NEW injuries to my neck at C3-5, C4-5, and C5-6!!! Whenever a person is diagnosed with having a mental illness we are treated differently with lesser care and consideration of the normal population, and this is not acceptable and should never be tolerated! People with mental illnesses require the same level of care equally as everyone else. Medicaid managed care recipients deserve the same quality level of care as anyone else. These organizations like Mutual of Omaha should face penalties and be regulated and held accountable by NYS for falsely denying coverage of people who are suffering from mental illness. It's hard enough navigating through life with a mental illness, we don't need the added stress and worry about not being able to pay rent or have money for food all because we don't have the mental capability to seek the proper treatment that we need. These companies get away with destroying lives because 9 times out of 10 the average person cannot find the right resources to get through their hurtles that are being forced to handle. I was denied the continuance of short term into long term disability benefits because I didn't have neuropsychiatric testing completed to determine cognitive decline, and because I wasn't hearing voices or hospitalized, I don't qualify as being 100 percent disabled, even though I have other medical diagnosis to prove and support my claims.