



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

MARGARET MEAD

An Excerpt from Barbara Kunowsky's talk at the opening of the VA Legislative Session

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www.facesva.org/pdf/articles/barbara_kunowsky_va_legislative_session_feb2008.pdf

The following is an excerpt from Barbara Kunowsky's talk at the opening of the Va. Legislative Session.

"In the next few months you hold the fate of 1 out of every 4 families in the commonwealth of Virginia in your hands. Your decisions as to changes in the language of the commitment law; if and how money will be spent toward best practice medicine for those who suffer with mental illness, and how you can best serve your faith and your oath as a public servant

As the director of FACES, a non-profit, local family Advocacy organization I have been asked to bring this message from our 600+ Virginia members, who daily fight the good fight to find treatment, safe housing and understanding for our loved ones.

You have over the last several months since the V-Tech Tragedy heard from two panels of experts; speaking to the much needed changes in our mental health system. You have been made aware of the best practices application of these needed changes.

Mental illness will not go away by ignoring those who suffer from it, by closing hospitals and eliminating beds or building new jails. (Our returning soldiers) will be one more layer of mental health needs for Virginia to address.

The time is now to make a change, the world is watching! Please become the hero you want to be, stand strong and bring an end to this suffering. This is Virginia's time to show the world the right way to address the wrongs and make things right. You can do this....one out of four Virginia families begs you to show your compassion and help us in giving our loved ones a better life, a safe path to recovery and hope for tomorrow.

Yes it is about money, and yes one size does not fit all.

No one program will fit everyone's needs."

Barbara has spoken for the FACES organization as a group, but **it is your individual voices that are needed to drive the message home. It is our responsibility as families to make our needs for services clear.** Let your representative know that you expect changes in the laws that exist, new programs to cover the necessary services, and adequate funding for all of the services that exist and the new ones that are mandated by the changes.

You can track the bills and their progresses on the web sites listed here or click on the links at our site

facesva.org

<http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/StateActivity/Virginia.html>

http://legis.state.va.us/1_cit_guide/contacting_my.html

Call or contact your representative and let them know that you are watching and waiting for a hero.