



“Ultimately, it’s the patient’s stability that matters, especially when it comes to mental illness. You can certainly stop or lessen the number of hospitalizations required by sticking with the medicines that work.”

Meet Gail | Austin, TX

Gail’s child developed schizoaffective disorder at the age of 14. This disorder can cause a combination of symptoms including hallucinations, delusions, depression, or mania, and can often lead to hospitalizations and admittance into treatment centers. Gail’s child has spent a good amount of time in these facilities. Over a period of a couple of years, Gail says her child was put on many different medication regimens before they finally discovered a medicine that worked and that was covered by Medicaid – Olanzapine. More importantly, this drug worked well in conjunction with her child’s other medications. At the end of the day, Gail strongly believes patients themselves need to be in charge of their own health care decisions and the medicines they receive.

Her Story

Gail’s child has been doing well on Olanzapine for quite some time. She is grateful for the medicine and for everyone who helps her child. Yet she still worries about the healthcare system in terms of having available psychiatrists to care for her child and others on a long-term basis.

“There’s a huge shortage of psychiatrists in Texas, so the ones who do practice here stay extremely busy. That makes it hard to get responses back. I spend a lot of time leaving lots of messages. I’m one of those very active parents who knows how to push for what my child needs, but I’m concerned about other families who don’t necessarily know how to advocate for themselves or their children.”

Gail says that, as a parent of a child going through a psychotic break, there are so many questions you don’t even think to ask because you are so overwhelmed and grabbing at straws just trying to figure out the best course of action. But she says there’s room for improvement in Texas healthcare.

“We can prevent so many hospitalizations by ensuring that patients get access to the right medicines at the right time. When my child turns 18 and becomes an adult, if navigating the healthcare system and getting the medicines you need remain tasks that are as difficult as they are right now, especially for someone with mental illness, this is a huge problem.”



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