

Hello my name is Martha Duerr and I was born and raised in Hilo.

First let me say thank you to the Hawaii Island Behavioral Health First Responders, Social Workers, Police, Fire Fighters, Public Safety Officers and Public Safety Health and Mental Health professionals. They need tools to do their jobs the way they'd like to as well as a system which doesn't work against them.

Mental Health is not Mental Crime. Mental Health is being treated as a crime because the judicial system is often the only way for help. Some figures show 70% of incarceration is Mental Health and Substance Abuse. We live on an island where I know 3 people currently in HCCC for mental health reasons and 2 more on other islands. One of them being my brother, with a case history of autism and bipolar who got incarcerated after a police wellness check after a health crisis incident. With court delays and health exam shortfalls he has been in HCCC for over 3 months. During that time, he and I have been told they aren't allowing visitors due to the dangers of construction and that visitation is a right not a privilege. He's been assaulted 10 times due to his mental state, he's complained of breathing issues and sleeping issues due to lights never being turned off, construction, concussion and hurting ribs from assaults. All of these things are horrible for any person but add it on to a person with a disability and it's heartbreaking. It's heartbreaking to get a phone call a day begging to go to the hospital only to tell him that the hospital has no beds and the doctors haven't submitted paperwork to court.

We live on an island where police are the only people that show up in a mental health crisis. We live on an island where my brother is being assaulted in jail instead of getting proper care. What's most frustrating is none of these are new issues, there's articles from 2017 about mental health and the horrible state of the jails, the lack of beds in the hospital. How many people are getting assaulted, being denied proper mental health treatment and in the end dying because the state isn't working fast enough to fix it. This is a violation of the peoples with disabilities act and an absolute shame on the kingdom of Hawaii.

Thank you for your time.