

1/17/23

Madam Attorney General,

I thought that only on my Island of Puerto Rico has shortages of mental health services. I came here with expectations to help my son's future and receive better Educational Alternatives and services that will help him thrive, but instead I face a broken system that does not provide the necessary support to the family members and caregivers of people with special needs. I am so surprised with the lack of staff, resources and positive preventative action from organizations, schools and providers. That often times I sit here and cry because I don't know what else to do or who to reach out to.

The stress of not having the support for my son's mental health needs has caused many families like mine to be physically and mentally exhausted. Not having the appropriate services is also damaging families. I can't even receive help for my other children who experience and witness the daily battle in our home. I feel horrible for them because the need is so great for the one child that it gets in the way of having meaningful family bonding with the others. Many of these families are made up of single mothers like me who make daily sacrifices to survive and get ahead. But it is a very lonely place. I feel that no one really knows how it feels to live without hope and putting even Faith to the test. My Faith is what keeps me standing even though there are days when I would like to give up. Countless thoughts go through my head and the future scares and worries me, but I believe that there is a purpose that I must fulfill and believe this is the start on my purpose.

My love for my children drives me to continue to try my best to stay strong and to plead for help. It's not that one wants to give up, it's that sometimes we can't do anymore and desperately need guidance and support. I believe that many of our children have suffered from a lot of trauma and have been crying out for help for a long time. There are many unfortunate situations that could have been prevented if these families like mine had received services when they asked for it.

Sincerely,

Diveth García

Autism Mom