

Steve Lurie's letter to the editor in response to Coyle's article, published August 28<sup>th</sup> 2010

As your editorial correctly points out, access to community programs and hospital beds is the problem facing people with mental illness. Ontario last amended its mental health legislation in 1999. The amendments broadened committal criteria and established community treatment orders. In 2005 a legislated review of the community treatment order provisions of the act took place and found that the amendments to the legislation were working. The review report recommended that the next legislative review ( which is due now) cover the full spectrum of community mental health programs. As the recent Select Committee report indicated, many services are in short supply. If there is to be a review of legislation it should include mandating the core basket of services outlined in the Select Committee report. In Ontario and elsewhere there is research that demonstrates access to community services and supportive housing is what makes the difference in reducing homelessness and hospital admissions. Currently mental health services are available to about 40% of the people who need them. If we are to have new legislation, it should ensure that everyone who needs mental health services gets them.