



Home Nursing Agency

Community Services

201 CHESTNUT AVE.
P.O. BOX 352
ALTOONA, PA 16603-0352
814-946-5411
FAX 814-941-1648
1-800-445-6262

March 19, 2002

Paula Aigner, Esq.
310 Penn Street
PO Box 168
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Re: Stephanie KEARNS

Dear Counselor Aigner,

I am writing to you regarding Stephanie Kearns, a patient of mine and the daughter of a client of yours. As you know, Stephanie's parents are divorced, and she lives with her mother. The relationship between her parents since their separation has been extremely difficult, and her father's behaviors have been cited by several observers as much of the reason for this. He alternately has made attempts to maintain a relationship with Stephanie and then has refused to have any contact with her. He has disregarded Stephanie's wishes regarding the issue of visitation, seeking to pursue resumed visitation despite her documented statements that she wished to sever all contact with him. Now, he is taking action to resume visitation after a long period of having none, and in contravention to Stephanie's wishes. It is out of concern for the impact of this action that I am writing.

Stephanie has been very strongly affected by her parents' divorce and the continuing conflict between them. She has experienced severe emotional and behavioral disturbances in the context of the inimical parental relationship, and has made significant progress only relatively recently, during a prolonged hiatus in visitation with her father. Since her father began to make efforts to reinstate visitation, Stephanie has undergone deterioration in her clinical condition. She expresses fear that her father will somehow kidnap her or will otherwise try to undermine her greatly improved relationship with her mother. She is afraid, anxious and depressed in response to her father's recent actions, and has lost some of the clinical improvement she had won over the last few months.

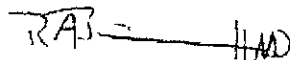
My concern is that a resumption of the visitations between Stephanie and her father will result in continued clinical decline and/or will destroy the possibility of further improvement, in effect trapping her in her current marginal state of functioning.

I therefore am writing to express my professional opinion that a reinstatement of visitation between Stephanie and her father is counter to Stephanie's best interests, and may indeed result in continued and/or progressively worsening damage to her psychological well-being. While I am mindful and supportive of the right of parents to have visitation with their children in such circumstances, I must respectfully recommend that in this case, the resumption of visitation between Stephanie and her father be deferred indefinitely, until Stephanie feels and is able to participate in these.

If you have any questions regarding this recommendation, please do not hesitate to contact me for clarification.

Thank you for your support of Stephanie and her mother, as they attempt to protect her and act in her best interests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RA Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending to the right.

RA Bennett, MD, PhD
Medical Director
Behavioral Health Services
Altoona Hospital/Home Nursing Agency