



Connecticut Community Providers Association
a unified voice for community human service providers

Human Services Committee
March 13, 2007

Re: S.B. 1338 An Act Concerning A Cost of Living Increase for Private Providers of Health and Human Services and

S.B. 1396 An Act Concerning the State Purchase of Service Contracts for Health and Human Services

Good afternoon Senator Harris, Representative Villano and members of the Human Services Committee. I am Heather Gates, President/CEO of Community Health Resources, a private, non-profit community-based, comprehensive, behavioral health system of care conveniently located in the communities east and north of Hartford. We provide a wide variety of mental health and support services for children, adults and families who are living with mental illness and/or substance abuse problems. Treatment, support, rehabilitation, prevention and education are provided by a well-trained dedicated staff of professionals committed to recovery.

I am also speaking to you today as co-chair of the Public Policy Committee of the Connecticut Community Providers Association, CCPA. We are pleased to support S.B. 1338, a bill that recognizes the immediate funding needs of community providers and expands the Governor's budget proposal to recognize the needs for all community providers, not just those who contract with DMR, DMHAS and DCF.

Community providers provide services to nearly 500,000 of the state's most vulnerable citizens and have struggled for decades with inadequate state funding. I have seen first-hand how inadequate funding severely hinders our ability to attract and retain qualified staff that we rely on to provide our clients with the services they need. Unlike other types of work, staff turnover often has catastrophic effects on the work we do by placing an incredible strain on our clients who often develop close, trusting relationships with our staff people. This can cause major crises or setbacks for people who already struggle with significant mental health issues. Addressing these high turnover rates is a constant struggle for community providers and takes time, energy and resources away from our fundamental task of providing human services.

Not only do we lack the funding to offer wages that are competitive to state employees performing similar work, we also struggle to pay for the escalating costs of health insurance, utilities and other infrastructure costs.

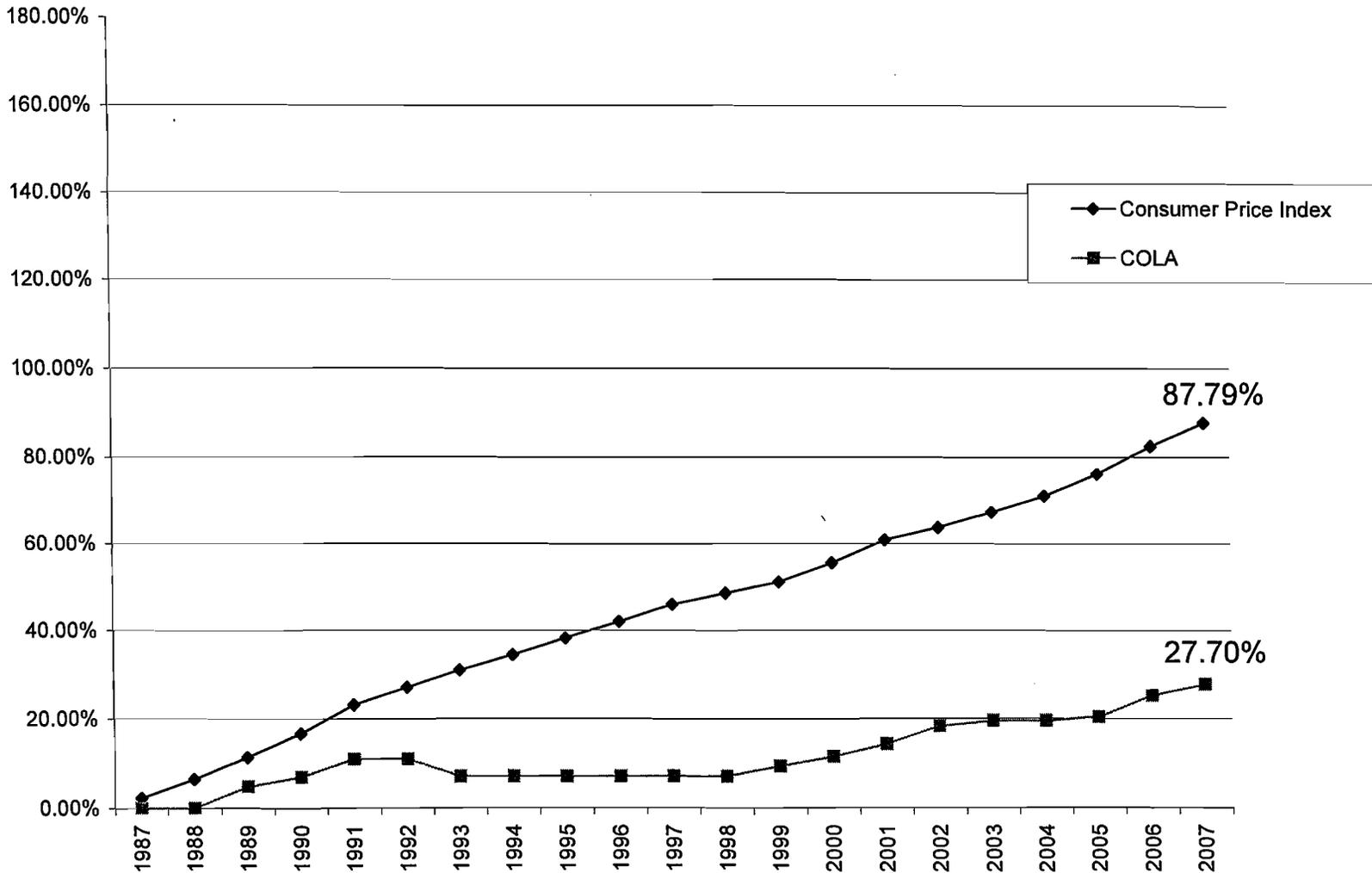
Community providers have maintained a high level of quality services despite the fact that we have never received adequate funding from the state. This legislation will enable us to continue to provide quality care and afford our clients an essential continuity of care. We are extremely proud of the work we do in caring for the hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents who depend on us. But we cannot continue to do this work with inadequate funding. We applaud this committee for raising a bill that recognizes the work that we do and the need for improved funding.

I'd also like to support S.B. 1396 An Act Concerning the State Purchase of Service Contracts for Health and Human Services. This bill waives the competitive procurement requirements for private providers of human services. Human service contracts are unlike other state contracts. We support people to live more productive and independent lives through employment supports, outpatient treatment, supported living, day programs, rehabilitation services, crisis and support programs and many other services. Our clients' success is dependent on consistency and a continuity of care. Re-bidding human service contracts jeopardizes the quality of care and would put our clients at risk. We appreciate the committee's understanding of our work by recommending that private providers be exempt from contract re-bidding requirements.

Thank you for your time and attention to these vital issues.



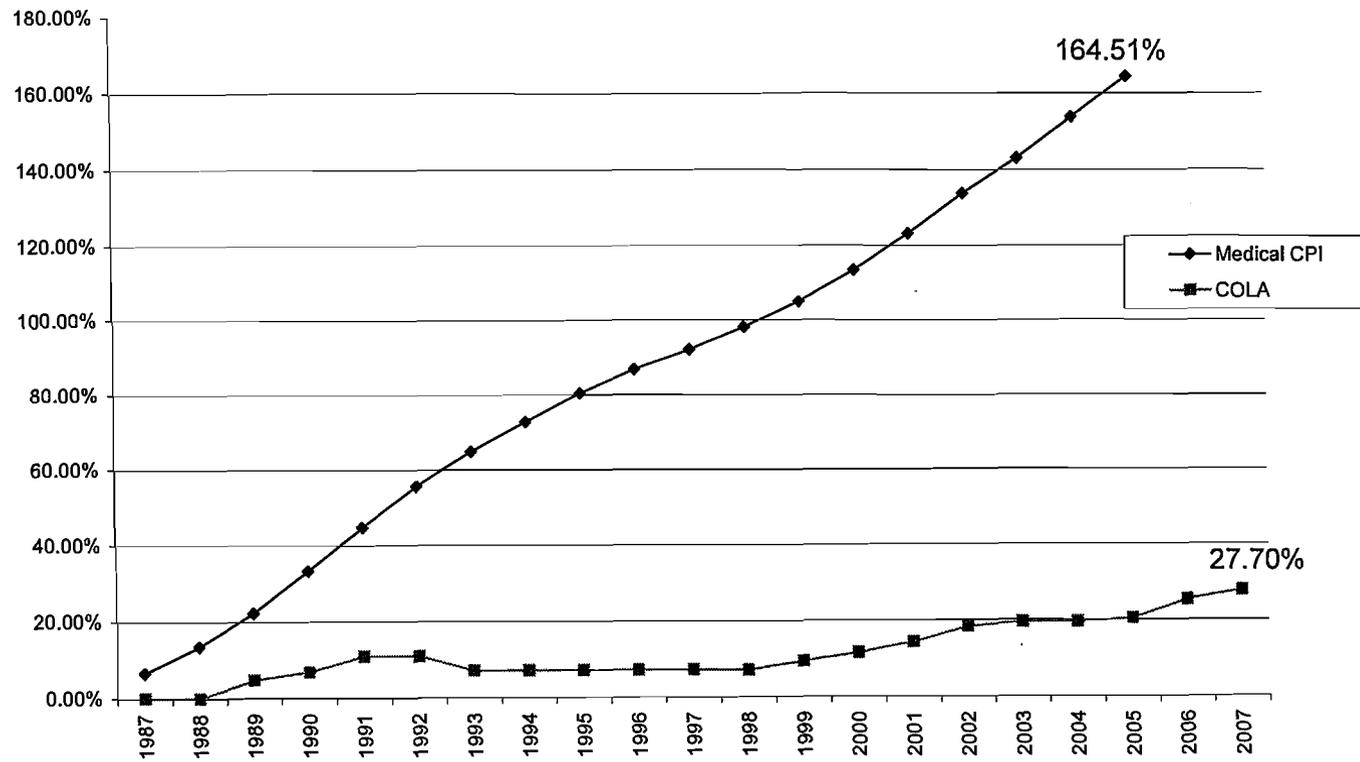
CCPA Analysis: Compounded Private Provider COLA Compared with Compounded Consumer Price Index (CPI)



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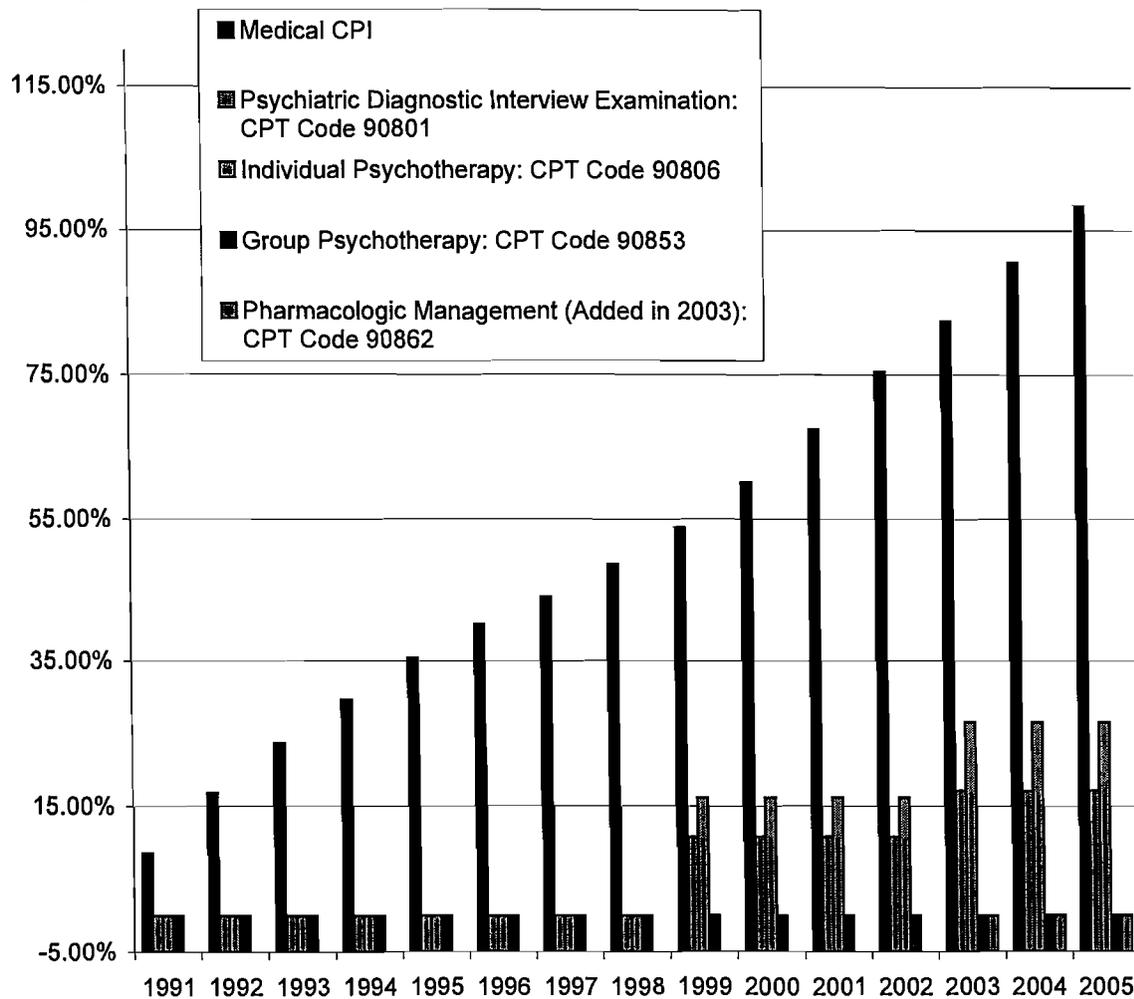


CCPA Analysis: Compounded Private Provider COLA Compared with Compounded Medical Consumer Price Index (CPI)





CCPA Analysis: Compounded Growth of Adult Community Mental Health Clinic Medicaid Rates Compared with Compounded Medical Consumer Price Index (CPI)



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