



**BIRMINGHAM GROUP
Health Services, Inc.**

Providing Hope - Changing Lives...

Providing outpatient clinical, case management, rehabilitation, domestic violence, and substance abuse prevention and education services to the Lower Naugatuck Valley and surrounding communities.

February 20, 2009

Good Afternoon Senator Harp, Representative Candelaria and member of the Appropriations Committee

My name is Marlene McGann and I am the Director of the Meriden –Wallingford Substance Abuse Council. I am reading testimony on behalf of Pamela Mautte, the Director of Valley Substance Abuse Action Council (VSAAC). The Regional Action Councils are the hub for prevention in the State as well as the coordinating point for addiction prevention in the State. At this time I would like urge you to support fully funding the Regional Action Councils which are efficient and effective.

The proposed budget does not include full funding for the Regional Action Councils (RACs). This funding is used by the RACs as core funding dollars that is crucial to the State and local communities. The RACs utilize the state funds to leverage and match additional federal and local funding. In the past 4 years, we have collectively enhanced prevention services in the state by obtaining \$6.5 million in federal and over \$8 million in local dollars. These dollars would not be available to us if we do not have the state dollars to leverage or match them. These dollars directly impact the communities you serve because we have been able to invest in local prevention activities. I ask you to remember your return on investment is for every state dollar you allocate to RAC's we bring in over \$4 in other funds including federal and local. However, it is important to remember, we need the state dollars to match these federal dollars as federal substance abuse block grant dollars can't be used to match additional federal dollars. Please do not break a system that is efficient, effective, and beneficial to our communities and the state.

Studies have proven that as economic decline prevails, substance abuse increases. We need to continue to be on the front lines in our communities. Insufficient funding will jeopardize the prevention infrastructure that CT has worked 20 years to build. In addition the RAC structure is held up as a model by other states and the federal government. Again, I remind you of the return on investment we provide.

We recognize that this budget proposal is impacting many services and agencies in CT. The Governor's proposed budget has eliminated the RAC line item and other state funds of approximately \$600,000 and includes a transfer from the pre-trial account of \$600,000. However, previously in the past several years, \$500,000 has also been transferred from the pre-trial account to the RACs. However, this transfer is now not included in the Governor's Budget. We ask you to reinstate the additional \$500,000 from the pre-trial account as in previous years. Again, I remind you of the return on investment we provide.

I urge you to remember that RAC's are a good investment of State dollars.

We ask you to remember that for every \$1 spent in prevention \$8 is saved in societal cost and therefore, it is an investment that should not overlooked. In conclusion, I remind you to remember that your return on investment.

Thank you for your time

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela A. Mautte