

Greetings Senators and Representatives,

My name is Dan Gaines and I am a registered voter from Waterbury. I am speaking today because I believe we should be expanding Community services instead of removing services. I have utilized Community services to help me remain out of Hospitalized services for most of my life. I would hate to think that because of budget cutbacks those services won't be available to others who might fall into my category because if not for these services, I would have had at least three admissions into the hospital. Non Profit Agencies like Independence Center, St Vincent De Paul, and others have helped me keep myself safe and stable. Cutting their funding would be like cutting a lifeline for me. I have a hard time trusting people and it takes time for me to build the confidence in someone who is there to help me. Counselors come and go because there isn't enough money available now to pay them what they are really worth. It will only get worse if cuts are made to budgets of non profits. We should be working on funding Community Solutions and not create new institutions. People can survive and thrive out in the community with the proper supports and that means not cutting funding for community programs and not making the same mistakes that were made when Norwich and Fairfield Hills were closed. Funding needs to follow the ones who leave the hospitals that you are planning to close into the community.