

Paul E. Clark
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Advocacy Unlimited

“DMHAS Public Hearing”

My name is Paul Clark and I have been living with manic depression for the last eight and a half years. I have had multiple inpatient and outpatient hospitalizations; I have worked in the mental health field; and I am an advocate for people living with mental illness.

I have received some of the best treatment in the country, and some of the worst. In my opinion, there is a mental health system in place throughout the state of Connecticut, but it is fragmented and broken. Promises have been made to people living with mental illness since the year 2000, and very few of these promises have been ~~kept~~ ^{kept}. Funding for people living with mental illness and addictions is already scandalously low, and now the Governor is proposing to reduce funding even more, which will directly impact some of the state's most vulnerable population. Many of these people who will be greatly affected by these proposed cuts in the budget cannot advocate for themselves and are therefore left in the shadows.

Reducing funding for any community mental health services especially crisis; community support; and case management will only drive costs up. Emergency room visits will dramatically increase; hospitalizations will dramatically increase; and so will the dollar signs.

*If you could picture the *mental health system* as a patient on life support, the Governor is now proposing to withdraw more oxygen, which is the very thing that is keeping the patient or the mental health system alive.

Money is being allocated across the state of Connecticut for education; the fine arts; restoring historical building sites; fixing pot holes; and building ball fields, while there is a virtual mental health crisis in the state. People are living on the street and homeless; people are living with untreated mental illnesses, because they do not have access to medical care and treatment; and hundreds of people go hungry every day in our state alone.

We do not work for you...you work for us! It is your responsibility to see that the most vulnerable citizens in the state are cared for. Thank you for listening to my concerns.