

# Connecticut Nonprofit Human Services Cabinet

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## Appropriations Committee Hearing on the Health & Hospitals Budget February 20, 2009

Children's League of Connecticut

Connecticut AIDS Resource Coalition

Connecticut Association for Community Action

Connecticut Association for Human Services

Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Connecticut Association of Nonprofits

Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness

Connecticut Community Providers Association

Connecticut Consortium of Legal Services

Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services

Connecticut Women's Consortium

Easter Seals Connecticut

End Hunger Connecticut

Human Services Council

Oak Hill

Planned Parenthood of Connecticut

The Connection, Inc.

Wheeler Clinic

The CT Nonprofit Human Services Cabinet is a statewide coalition comprised of 20 nonprofit human service associations and organizations representing approximately 800 providers. Its mission is to advance a strong and unified nonprofit human services system to effectively meet community needs. Members play a vital role in addressing the critical health and human services needs that face so many Connecticut residents – they provide the safety net that *anyone* can find themselves in need of in the blink of an eye.

You will hear from many members of the Cabinet and those they represent throughout the Appropriations Committee process about specific budget items. The Cabinet appreciates that the Governor's budget did not include across the board cuts to human services and we sincerely hope that the Appropriations Committee will avoid any across-the-board cuts as well. Nonprofit providers went without a cost-of-living increase last year and we recognize the realities that we are faced with this year. Even if the financial crisis never occurred, nonprofits would still be underfunded and still be in need of a COLA. Given this fact, any across-the-board cuts to nonprofits would devastate our ability to provide health and human services to the state's most vulnerable residents.

The Cabinet opposes the Governor's recommended cuts to HIV/AIDS services in the Department of Public Health (DPH) budget. With over 10,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in CT, a \$2.5 million cut to services is unconscionable. This represents a 40% cut to the DPH AIDS services line and puts CT back to pre-2000 funding levels. Ironically, DPH, which estimates that there are an additional 7,200 people living with HIV/AIDS in CT who are unaware of their status, has introduced legislation that makes it easier for doctors to test patients for HIV. These tests will result in additional people being brought into a system of care that will not be able to support them. Despite claims that an additional \$3.3 million of federal Ryan White funds will be restored this year, the federal funding formula remains unchanged – no additional federal funds will be available making the proposed cuts all the more devastating to HIV/AIDS services in CT.

The Cabinet also has concerns about cuts to Other Expenses and the Community Health Services line in the DPH budget. In particular, we oppose any cuts the Family Planning Program that is funded in these portions of the budget. The Family Planning Program provides comprehensive reproductive health services to low-income men and women and the results couldn't be better – for every \$1 spent on this program the state saves \$4 on the health care costs associated with unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease. In tough financial times, an investment in making sure women are able to access family planning services, including reliable contraception is absolutely vital.

The Cabinet firmly believes that our state's budget cannot be balanced solely on cuts - \$8 billion in cuts would be devastating to the residents of this state. And while we understand the dire financial situation and that some cuts will be necessary, we encourage the Committee to keep in mind what we want our state to look like when we come out of these difficult financial times. We must work towards a more efficient and cost-effective human services delivery system that is sustainable in the future, during both good times and bad. This will not be accomplished by eliminating essential human services to achieve short-term savings; as such cuts always result in increased costs in the long-term.

Please contact Liza Andrews, Nonprofit Cabinet Project Director with questions at [landrews@ctnonprofits.org](mailto:landrews@ctnonprofits.org) or (860) 525-5080.