

**Kent Donovan**  
**Testimony Appropriations Committee**  
**Department of Public Health Budget**  
**20 February 2009**

Good Evening Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian (these are the co-chairs, but there could be different folks running the hearing if they split the room up) and members of the committee. My name is Kent J. Donovan and I am a student at the University of Connecticut, working on my Master's Degree in Social Work.

I am doing my internship at AIDS Project Hartford.

I am here before you this evening to request that you do not support the proposed cuts to the budget for funding for AIDS and am requesting that you restore the \$2.5 million to the AIDS Service line.

Among my many job assignments at AIDS Project Hartford, one of the assignments has me working at AIDS Project Hartford Connection's Wellness Center, which offers psychosocial support services and support groups for straight men, gay and bi-men, women and individuals who are struggling with addiction. Members can also receive medical examinations, mental health and substance use counseling, advocacy, acupuncture and a meals program. For members of Connections to lose their funding would be devastating for them, daily I meet people who are homeless, struggling with addiction, and who, on top of all of this are HIV + and Connections Wellness Center Offers them hope, someone to talk to, a nurse to confer with and possibly their only

warm and nourishing meal for the day, here they can also meet with their peers who can offer them encouragement and guidance and tactics to survive their illness.

Also to be affected are the Medical Case Managers who are placed strategically throughout the Hartford area and surrounding towns. For many of our HIV+ clients their case managers are their lifeline to living, and for many, this collaboration helps to improve their lives, prolongs their lives and many of the clients have assured me that they have a reason to live and will not give up.

I don't believe that these cuts are fair and just, to punish a population who has suffered enough, AIDS can happen to anyone, lets show them that yes we do care and will do what we can do to support you and help you to continue to survive and thrive. I thank you for your time.