

Since  
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THE  
CHILDREN'S  
CENTER  
OF HAMDEN

December 9, 2009

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Tony DelMastro and I am here to speak to the proposed cuts in certain Medicaid provider rates that may affect behavioral health services to children. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Children's Center of Hamden.

Beginning January 1, 2006 the State of Connecticut put into place the Behavioral Health Partnership. It was formed for the expressed purpose of delivering behavioral health services in the community as an intervention to prevent more costly and disruptive interventions. The State structured services that took advantage of the opportunity of leveraging State funding by offering services that qualified for Medicaid reimbursement.

It made sense for Connecticut to develop services that meet federal criteria for medical necessity that could be delivered to residents who lived in the community as opposed to more expensive out of home treatment settings. It helps to stabilize people within their community, and keeps them connected to family and other natural support systems.

Over the last several years the State has recognized and developed intensive services in the community, some with and some without state grants, with providers who have the skill and ability to provide medically necessary therapeutic services.

Because these services can be delivered in settings that do not require an enormous infusion of capital expenditures, they could be developed rapidly to serve communities that otherwise are under resourced.

By meeting federal requirements for Medicaid, a substantial portion of the costs of these services benefiting Connecticut residents are paid for by federal funds. While reducing the state share of those expenditures reduces current state expenses, in many respects doing so multiplies the reduction in services because federal reimbursement is lost when the state reduces its expenditure for this service.

It is also worth noting that for the State to continue to secure these federal dollars, providers must maintain stringent compliance with the Medicaid regulations that govern these services. Reducing the funding for these services may very well result in undermining provider's ability to maintain compliance.

I am aware that you face a daunting undertaking to develop a plan that eliminates projected deficits. My request is that you ask those within State government who you rely on for financial advice to provide you with accurate information so that we do not take steps that are penny wise and pound foolish.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,  
Anthony DelMastro, CEO  
The Children's Center of Hamden  
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