

Dec. 9 2009

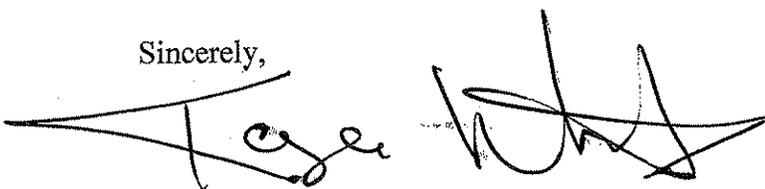
To: The Governors Mitigation Budget Committee

Greetings,

My name is Kaye White, I am a Drug Treatment Advocate and also work on the Hartford Syringe Exchange Program for AIDS Project Hartford. I am here to testify on the importance of DTA and the Needle Exchange program and how much it is a necessity for the community that I serve.

Let me tell you the story about a man named Milton. Milton is a 6 foot tall 185 pound Caucasian male who is a heroin addict that used for many years. His state of mind was one of hopelessness but felt like he wanted and needed help but didn't know how to go about seeking it. I met Milton from a referral at Hartford Community Court. I listen to Milton's story about his addiction and failed efforts of trying to get into drug treatment on his own. I then explained to Milton what it is I do and how Drug Treatment Advocates can be the voice when your voice isn't being heard. Milton was discouraged and didn't believe we can open doors for him because he was labeled as a high volume user and drug treatment won't work for him. I began to make phone calls that started around 10am. I continued to network for attempting to contact case managers, detox treatment facilities, and counselors only to get busy signals, voice mails, and promised call backs. Three hours later I had no luck and decided to take a break and wait for return phone calls and responses from co-workers in the field. I asked Milton to meet me back at court in one hour and told him "I won't give up if you don't". From my experience in the field, most clients don't come back. Milton came back which showed me he was willing to receive help. I continued to make phone calls and finally calls started to come back and I faced the same issue that Milton had faced in the past where I was having the door shut in my face. At my last desperation of hope, I finally got to speak with someone that could help. It's now 5pm, I was taking Milton to detox which is one step closer to the start of his new life. Once we arrived, paperwork had to be filled out, insurance needed to be checked, vital sign and other measures had to be taken before being admitted. Once that was done we found ourselves in a waiting position again. At 6pm Milton's name was called and to our surprise we were notified that his would be admitted and a bed was available because someone pulled strings and a phone call was made behind the scenes that lifted the red flag off his drug history. Milton thanked me and said he didn't think I would be able to help, but I stuck by him and he was grateful. This was six months ago and Milton is still clean and with his family to this day. This is one of many stories on what Drug Treatment Advocacy is all about. This is why this program is so important to this community. DTA is the voice when the addict's voice isn't being heard. Thank you in advance for not cutting Drug Treatment Advocacy and AIDS Serves for these programs saves lives in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kaye White', written in a cursive style.

Kaye White