



September 15, 2009

To: Members – Appropriations and Human Services Committees

From: Terry Edelstein, President/CEO

Re: **Testimony – Social Services Block Grant FFY10 Allocation Plan**

Please accept these comments regarding the proposed FFY10 Social Services Block Grant allocation plan.

The Connecticut Community Providers Association represents organizations that provide services and supports for children and adults with disabilities and significant needs including people with addictions, mental illness, developmental, and physical disabilities.

The FFY10 proposed SSBG allocation plan cuts funding for services by 4.1% from the FFY09 funding level. Funding for FFY09 was cut by 6% from the FFY08 allocation. The cumulative impact is a 9% reduction in funding. This translates into a loss in service access and capacity for the individuals served through the SSBG.

Private nonprofit community providers provide a large array of services funded by the SSBG including case management, counseling, employment, independent and transitional living, residential treatment, substance abuse services and special services for people with developmental disabilities. The services funded through the SSBG are inter-linked. A person needing employment supports may also need case management or substance abuse treatment or legal services.

Most of the funds designated for state agencies are subcontracted to community providers in order to provide community-based services. For example, the DDS allocation pays for supported employment and day program services offered by community providers. This cumulative 9%

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reduction reduces the amount of employment supports that can be offered. DMHAS subcontracts with addiction treatment providers to provide intensive and intermediate residential treatment, Intensive Outpatient, methadone maintenance and long term care. A reduction in funding means a reduction in services to vulnerable individuals.

We appreciate the efforts DSS has made over the years to avoid cuts to the many critical human service programs funded through the SSBG through use of carry-forward funds, no longer available this year. Given the decrease in funding, it is essential that DSS provide advance notice to its contractors about the anticipated reduction in funding so that they have an opportunity to renegotiate their contract terms. In FFY09 DSS contractors were not informed about the 6% reduction until halfway through the fiscal year, while services had been rendered and employees paid for their work. We urge DSS to inform its contractors about their proposed contract allotments now, before the federal fiscal year begins. Continuity in services is essential and an abrupt reduction in contracts will result in staff layoffs and disrupted services.

Thank you for reviewing this proposed SSBG allocation plan and considering the impact of what becomes a two year 9% spending cut on those individuals depending on these services and supports.