

Thank you for the chance to testify today. As far as I understand it, Governor Rell is proposing to close Cedar Crest hospital in order to save money. Once Cedar Crest closes the plan is to transfer 64 people to CVH and Bridgeport. The other 30 people will be placed in on of two 15 bed facilities. Cedar Crest should not be closed.

I have been diagnosed as bi-polar for seven years. I mention this because I have lived in a hospital long term, I have lived in group homes and I currently live in supportive housing. Each type of housing has pluses and minuses.

If Cedar Crest is closed some people will need to stay in a hospital setting. These people should be transferred to CVH. Living in a hospital setting is not enjoyable but it is often needed. Those who are ready to live in a different setting should be placed out in the community. They should be placed in group homes or other home-like settings. It would be less expensive to rehab older properties in the city then to build two new facilities. In addition, there is more of a sense of being home in these group settings then in a more hospital-like setting.

Nurses and doctors do what they can to make people feel at home in the hospital but it is difficult to feel at home in an institutional setting. At a certain point in some patients treatment it becomes appropriate to take patients out of the hospital and put them in the community. Many people do not have family to stay with. Those patients need a place to go.

Group homes and half way houses give more of a feeling of living in an actual home. They have kitchens, living rooms, and bedrooms. These homes are usually houses which adds to the feeling of being at home. It is often beneficial for those in recovery to live with others with similar experiences. Governor Rell should consider putting some of the extra patients from Cedar Crest in group homes. In addition, the legislature should consider funding more of these homes and other alternate but home-like settings. It helps the mentally ill and is usually less expensive than the hospital settings and larger projects.

Being mentally ill can often be difficult. Not having somewhere appropriate to live is a huge problem for the mentally ill. Instead of cutting spending and building new institutions, the governor should be sending people to alternative housing. In fact, instead of cutting spending to the mental health community the governor should be spending money to build more alternative housing units. Thank you.