

**TESTIMONY OF KYM BANTON, MSW OF MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL SUBMITTED TO  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: H. B. No. 5018 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE  
EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2011.**

Thursday, February 11, 2010

Dear Appropriations Committee Members. Thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony to you. My name is Kym Banton. I am the Enhanced Care Coordinator with Family Advocacy Program at Middlesex Hospital serving children and families in Middlesex County. Given the current fiscal climate, I appreciate the need to cut cost, balance the budget, and the difficulty facing you but I urge you to take a closer look at potential cuts in the governor's budget that are intended to bring savings, which I believe will instead lead to increased spending that is not discretionary.

While eliminating Enhanced Care Coordinator (ECC) positions appear to be a cost saving measure on paper, I would like to illustrate how it will lead to increased spending, using examples from 5 cases since August of 2009. The approximate annual cost of the ECC position at Middlesex Hospital is \$65,000 and the conservative cost saving measure over a 6 month period for 5 cases is \$96,000.00. How can the elimination of this vital service be viewed as a cost saving when DCF would have paid out \$96,000.00 had the ECC not been involved? The ECC has the capacity to provide intensive case management services for a case load of 12 high risk youth so the estimated savings is even more.

Specific examples include:

- **\$38,000.00** saved by working with a mother with a history of mistrust of providers and misuse of services to identify alternate to sub-acute and more appropriate use of services over a 4 month.
- **\$23,650.00** was saved by eliminating another family's use of the emergency department and in-patient psychiatric care over the course of 5 months
- **\$15,586.00** savings with an early discharge from Germaine Lawrence residential care
- **\$14,446.00** accelerated discharge and foster care placement
- **\$4, 257.73** by avoiding ED visits and follow ups

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ECC utilizes the wrap around philosophy and works with the parent(s) to help them advocate for and take an active role in their child's mental health needs. For many of these families, the concept of being a part of the decision making process and working with providers is a foreign concept, as many have the experience of being told what to do or that they are not doing enough for their children. This promotes buy in and increases the likelihood that participation and follow through with the least restrictive treatment plans will be successful.

Rather than eliminate crucial programs I urge you to please consider ways to balance our state budget, specifically by supporting the revenue options proposed by the Better Choices for Connecticut coalition, including closing the corporate tax loopholes, evaluating corporate tax breaks to see whether CT is actually getting an economic return on its investment, delaying reductions in the estate tax and increasing taxes on households more able to pay. We cannot rely on further spending cuts in this budget. Dollars cut already outnumber revenues raised 3:1. Because of the national recession, people's needs are going up dramatically as the state's resources to meet those needs are falling. Eliminating positions that provide care and services to our most vulnerable children and families in the least restrictive and most cost effective manner can only increase cost. I would welcome the opportunity to share more data with you at any point.

Respectfully submitted,

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