

February 18, 2010

TO: Connecticut State Appropriations Committee  
FROM: David Maker

My name is David Maker. I am a retired State employee. My wife Emily and I reside at 205 Vernon Avenue in Vernon, CT. Matthew Kwolek, a client of HARC for the past decade, is Emily's son and my stepson. Matthew is 30 years old. He has developmental disability with autistic tendencies, is prone to seizures, and has some food allergies. Matthew resides at a HARC group home in Bloomfield, and works at HARC in Hartford.

We question the State's 90% attendance standard for Matthew and other clients of private providers. On what is this 90% figure based? Does it take into account the health of clients, so much more fragile than that of the general public, so much more needful of physician and hospital visits? Does it take into account the protection of on-site clients from contagion or disruption that other attendees might introduce, attendees who have illness or behavioral problems? My experiences have convinced me that absenteeism from HARC's programs is not a matter of avoidable caprice. Client health, rather than an arbitrary figure, should determine standards for attendance.

We question also the application of an attendance standard for clients of private providers when no similar standard applies to clients of the State. The trend in fiscal conservatism is to seek taxpayer relief through privatization of services. In such a climate, it seems disingenuous that the State would place strictures on private providers of services to the disabled, especially in the light of testimony that private provision is more cost-effective than State provision of the same services.

Thank you for considering the concerns of myself, my wife, and other guardians of disabled clients in Connecticut.

Handwritten signature of David Maker in cursive script.