

Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing on Health and Hospitals
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
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Room 2C, Legislative Office Building

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Good Evening Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Linda Lentini and I would like to start off by thanking you. Thank you for recognizing the need for Young Adult Services and not cutting any of their funding. I work at Advocacy Unlimited and we have a Young Adult program, and just like you, we recognize that Young Adults are our future. As many of you may remember, being a Young Adult is challenging and when you are faced with a psychiatric disability or co-occurring disorder it can be overwhelming. The programs that DMHAS offers Young Adults give them the education, skills and hope to establish a life. So thank you.

As I stated above, I work at Advocacy Unlimited and I talk to many persons in recovery on a daily basis about Mental Health and Addiction services in Connecticut. The one message that is very clear is that we cannot afford to eliminate or reduce any services. If services are reduced, recovery becomes an impossible goal and hopelessness may set in. One in four adults experience a mental health disorder. Imagine how many people in this room experience mental illness and/or substance abuse. Services are crucial to maintain life and keep people in recovery out of jails, hospitals, or shelters. Please respect everyone's life by giving them the opportunity to have one.

Many aspects make up recovery, such as therapy, case management, medication, health care, employment, and housing. It would be impossible to say that any of them could be eliminated or reduced. As a person that cares deeply for the job that I do and the people that I help, please do not make the choice of reducing any of the services that are crucial to recovery.

The task that you face is enormous and I appreciate the time and dedication that you are putting into these hearings. My hope is that you recognize the need for recovery and maintain the current funding.