

Testimony submitted by:

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NAMI-CT Public Policy Committee – Public Hearing Testimony

Submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly Appropriations Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 2C, 6:00 PM, Thursday, February 18, 2010

**H.B. No. 5018: AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES AND
REVENUES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2011**

Agency: Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

Founded in 1984, the *National Alliance on Mental Illness – Connecticut Chapter (NAMI-CT)* is Connecticut's largest member organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. NAMI-CT's *Public Policy Committee* is a diverse group of individuals, families, healthcare professionals, and other allies united by the understanding that more effective and better integrated systems of treatment and support services will have social and fiscal benefits not only for people whose lives are directly affected by mental illness, but for the entire state of Connecticut.

Ensure Access to Housing and Community-Based Services

The State expects a nearly \$15.4 million net savings from the closure of Cedar Ridge Hospital. An overwhelming, well-established body of evidence shows that community-based supportive housing is an effective, cost-saving measure. Supportive housing combines available support and employment services with permanent, independent, affordable rental housing... and decreases reliance on expensive state services. **The General Assembly should invest the anticipated savings in DMHAS Housing Vouchers for Supportive Housing to ensure that more people's lives are stabilized and improved through appropriate housing.**

Preserve Funding for the Young Adult Services Program (YAS)

This bill would preserve allocated YAS funding. With a growing number of young adults transitioning from the Department of Children and Families (DCF), YAS is already stretched too thin; cuts would mean devastating consequences for young adults in need of services, and the realization of unnecessary costs throughout the system. **The General Assembly should preserve YAS funding.**

Like Connecticut's families, our elected leaders must maximize savings and minimize costly consequences. Their decisions must be practical today, and position us well for the future. Supportive housing and young adult services are proven measures with benefits now and in the years ahead.

Thank you for considering this testimony and promoting our state's mental and fiscal health.