

**TESTIMONY FOR THE DSS AND DCF BUDGET HEARING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2010 at 5:00PM**

FROM: Susanne M. Turi, BA, CPRP
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TO: CT Governor M. Jodi Rell, the Appropriations Committee and other relevant committees (such as Health and Human Services), and all Senators and Representatives in the Connecticut General Assembly

RE: PLEASE DO NOT FURTHER HARM THE MOST VULNERABLE OF CONNECTICUT'S CITIZENS
(senior citizens; people with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities; the working poor; and others who have recently fallen into or are stuck in the cycle of poverty) **by imposing new costs, especially on psychiatric medications and for other medical care.**

IT IS MY PLEA THAT YOU WHO ARE LEGISLATORS IN THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL REJECT GOVERNOR RELL'S PROPOSED CUTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES' BUDGET and I recommend that, instead, Connecticut's legislators and Governor Rell should use the money proposed for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to provide additional appropriate housing and supports in the community at large for senior citizens, and people with disabilities...and also protect young adults living with mental illnesses.

PLEASE TAKE THE FOLLOWING STANCES ON SEVERAL CRITICAL ISSUES

- **REJECT** the proposal that would remove the protection for people with mental illnesses on Medicaid/SAGA who are stable on psychiatric medications. *(This protection was just put in place recently to prevent barriers when consumers try to get their medications at pharmacies).*
- **REMOVE or REDUCE** the new co-pays that - since January 1, 2010 - have been imposed at the rate of \$15 or \$20 per month in co-pays that Medicaid clients have to pay every month before they can pick up their medications. **In brief...on 12/31/2009, the very low income clients with only Medicare and Medicaid insurances were able to get most or all of their prescription medications FREE....THEN on 1/1/2010 they had to begin paying the first \$15 or \$20 in co-pays before being able to pick up their drugs. FOR SOME IT HAS BECOME A CHOICE BETWEEN BUYING FOOD or BUYING THEIR MEDICATIONS!!!**
- **REJECT** the idea of adding more or higher co-pays for prescription drugs and **REJECT** the imposition of, or increase in the amount of, co-pays for medical visits, lab tests, and other such preventive and/or maintenance support services for people...especially for people with mental health problems, but also for others who cant' afford more outlays. **AGAIN, IT CAN COME DOWN TO A CHOICE BETWEEN BUYING FOOD AND BUYING MEDICATION!!!**
- **REJECT ANY MOVE THAT WOULD INCREASE AN ALREADY TROUBLESOME NEW EXPENSE;** that is, reject increases in the newly imposed (1/1/2010) co-pays on prescription drugs for people enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare Part D...where prior to 1/1/2010 people with very low incomes had NO co-pays at all.
- **REJECT ANY INCREASE** in premiums for certain children who get their healthcare through Husky B.

ANECDOTAL EXAMPLES SHOWING HOW MEDICAID & RELATED CUTS HAVE BEEN HARMFUL

- 1) Sue Turi's personal experiences **AND** (2) Sue's 65-year old neighbor's experiences