

Appropriations Committee, Public Hearing on the Deficit Mitigation Plan
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Senator Harp, Rep. Geragosian and members of the appropriations committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk about the effects of the Gov. Mitigation Plan on my Agency and the 300 individuals and families we serve. First, I would like to thank you for all your support for Community Providers across Connecticut. We are aware of your efforts to help us to remain whole and run cost effective services.

The Community Providers across the state care for over 500,000 of Connecticut's neediest citizens. These providers have been chronically underfunded for over 20 years. This chronic underfunding has eroded Connecticut's safety net and is placing many citizens in jeopardy. Most of the individuals that receive services under this system have been victimized in the past while living in institutional settings; it worries me that we will victimize them again through lack of services.

As our Agency partners with the state to continue to provide services to individuals with disabilities in our community, meeting critical needs and saving the state thousands of dollars, we are constantly finagling resources & cutting expenses in order to bridge the gap. The agency has had to fundraise tens of thousands of dollars in order to balance our budget. Workers comp, has increased \$50,000 this year alone. The increases for medical and vehicle insurance have not been received yet, but I am assured they are also going up. We try to be creative and bring in new business to spread the costs, consolidate programs to save money and be more efficient. We maximize revenues and reduce expenses in any way we can find.

Community providers are facing challenges on multiple fronts

- State funding has been reduced; our agency is loosing \$20,000 in February alone.
- City/Town funding has been reduced. Our Agency I lost \$60,000 of funding through the local boards of education this year
- Private fundraising has gone way down with the economy
- Demand for services are going up.

CCPA data shows that 50,000 people who presently receive services from Community Providers may not receive services or will receive reduced services.

We all must remember the Community Provider system is the states way to save money. If this system is destroyed or eroded it will cost the state much more revenue that it is currently spending. With the economy in the position it is, I feel it is critical for Connecticut to spend its money wisely and to keep its safety nets strong.

Thank you and I will keep you all in my thoughts and prayers as you work diligently to resolve this crisis for the best of all Connecticut's' citizens.