



**Community Providers Association**  
Caring for Connecticut.

March 19, 2010

**CCPA TESTIMONY: S. B. 473 AAC STATE CONTRACTING**

I am pleased to provide testimony in support of two major sections of S.B. 473.

**Section 1** acknowledges the precarious situation of community providers by supporting the ability of providers to adjust their budget expenditures if contractual funding is reduced by 3% or more. We support the concept of flexibility of budgeting within a provider organization, outlined in this bill.

We have major concerns about the impact of any funding reduction on the community provider system. The system has been dramatically underfunded for more than 25 years. As the Medical Consumer Price Index has grown by over 201 %, the funding to cover costs of services for community providers has only increased 33%. That is an average funding increase of 1%, while staffing and operations costs have gone up exponentially. Community providers run lean agencies and have cut their administrative costs to the bone. Any reduction in funding for community providers will very likely result in a reduction of services.

We appreciate the support of your Committee in giving community providers the ability to manage our limited resources in order to maximize service provision. We would be pleased to work with the Committee to address the impact of loss of funding on the community provider system and its ability to serve vulnerable individuals.

**Section 4** extends the term of the pilot program for janitorial work for disadvantaged or disabled persons from four years to seven years. This legislation is vital to maintaining employment for hundreds of people with disabilities supported through the Preferred Purchasing Program and would help to provide additional time to pilot the new program incorporating employment opportunities for people with disabilities and those with economic disadvantages.

**CCPA**

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In 1977 the Legislature established a Preferred Purchasing Program (PA 77-405; CGS 17b-656) to address low employment rates for people with disabilities, promoting employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities through government contracting. CCPA administers this Preferred Purchasing Program. Through the Program, community providers supply state agencies with needed products and services rendered by people with disabilities. The Program has produced employment, employment training, work hours and wages for people with disabilities in a variety of work settings, including janitorial services, office settings, commercial laundry, landscaping, and manufacturing sites.

Success of the Preferred Purchasing Program in FY09 includes:

- \$2.6 million in wages (bringing the total over the last ten years to \$23 million for workers with severe disabilities)
- Employment opportunities for 819 people with disabilities

In 2006, the Legislature modernized this program by creating the Qualified Partnership Pilot Program (PA 06-129 CGS 4a-82). The purpose of this Public Act was to establish a pilot program that would promote employment for people with disabilities and economic disadvantages with commercial sector janitorial contractors and to evaluate the effectiveness of such a program for use on a larger scale as a method for addressing the employment needs of these two groups. The Public Act was also instrumental in resolving differences between two competing groups advocating for standard wage opportunities for people with disabilities and economic disadvantages while protecting the jobs of others through worker retention language. S.B. 472 would extend this important pilot to protect employment opportunities for workers with disabilities, allow for additional time to meet the pilot goals and thoroughly evaluate the pilot.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation.

Terry Edelstein, President/CEO