

**Testimony in Favor of Raised Bill 402**  
**An Act Concerning the Behavioral Health Partnership**  
**Jeffrey Walter**  
**March 12, 2010**

My name is Jeffrey Walter and I am testifying today on behalf of the CT Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council which I co-chair with Senator Harris. The Council was established in 2006 to provide oversight of behavioral health services for children and families under HUSKY and the DCF Voluntary Services Program. The Council is constituted by statute with representation from all stakeholders, including legislative leaders or their designees, state agencies, providers, consumers and consumer advocates.

The Departments of Social Services and Children and Families comprise the Partnership itself. The oversight council has worked collaboratively with the departments to achieve Partnership goals for expanding community based, family-centered services, maximizing federal revenue, and reducing institutional care. The BHP was established as a carve-out from the HUSKY program because of widespread dissatisfaction with access to, and the quality of, behavioral health care services delivered by HUSKY managed care companies. Over the past four years, the Council and Partnership Departments have worked hard to improve the service system with the result that hospital inpatient care has been reduced by more than 17% and community-based outpatient and home based services have more than doubled.

The Oversight Council supports the very important concepts in Raised Bill 402 which would bring into the Partnership the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services along with new coverage groups, namely recipients of State Administered General Assistance, Adult, Blind and Disabled in the current Medicaid Fee for Service program, and Charter Oak Health Plan. The bill would extend oversight by the Council to these new coverage groups. The bill also adds the Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services as a Council member.

We believe that the CT BHP Oversight Council represents a model of collaboration among the executive and legislative branches of government and all the constituencies that have a stake in the provision of accessible, high quality behavioral health care services to nearly 400,000 Connecticut children, adults and families. With the cooperation and active involvement of the Partnership agencies, we have succeeded in creating a structure, as well as an environment of trust, that promotes transparency and accountability. The inclusion of additional coverage groups will enable the Partnership and the Council to better coordinate care and reduce fragmentation, administrative duplication and costs.

On behalf of the Council, I thank you for your consideration of Bill 402. I would be happy to answer any questions.

[jwalter@rushford.org](mailto:jwalter@rushford.org)  
(203)238-6803