

March 1, 2011

TESTIMONY

HEALTH & HOSPITALS APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

RE: DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Robbyn Sibley

Good afternoon Senator Harp and Representative Candelaria. My name is Robbyn Sibley and I am from Oakdale, CT. I am here today regarding the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services budget.

I was a recipient of services from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for many years and now I am serving as the Vice President of Southeastern Mental Health Authority's Community Advisory Board and President of National Alliance on Mental Illness Southeastern Connecticut Affiliate. I am also a trained Advocate through Advocacy Unlimited. As a result I have seen the impact that budget cuts make.

The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services works hard to serve all the clients they have in the state. They do this on a shoestring budget with less and less staff. On top of that the population they serve keeps increasing as more young adults are moving over to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services from Department of Children and Families.

There is a great need for supportive housing. I am very pleased that in Governor Dannel Malloy's budget proposal there is the mention of 150 new units of supportive housing across the state. We are also still going through with Money Follows the Person program. Governor Dannel Malloy's budget proposal also mentions \$1.1 million in supportive services through the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. This would help clients tremendously.

Also, increasing Medicare Part D copays would be a horrendous idea. I myself have to pay close to \$200.00 a month for medication co-pays. My other option is to pick and choose what medications to get each month. Which I still have to do some months. Even though I belong to a group that stands against the co-pays for medicaid, I myself as an individual am for them. Perhaps it could be done on a sliding scale basis.

Thank you for your time and listening to me. All the hard work you do for the citizens of this state is appreciated.