



March 4, 2011

To: Appropriations Committee

From: Terry Edelstein, President/CEO

Re: H.B. No. 6380 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE 30, 2013. **DSS BUDGET**

The Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA) represents organizations that provide services and supports for people with disabilities and significant challenges including children and adults with substance use disorders, mental illness, developmental, and physical disabilities. Community providers deliver quality health and human services to 500,000 of Connecticut's residents each year. We are the safety net.



We appreciate Governor Malloy's commitment not to shred the "safety net" and to support community-based services. There are many very positive aspects to this budget. At the same time, we need to call your attention to sections of the budget that do result in cuts and that will have an impact on the ability of community providers to support people with disabilities and other challenges in the community. **My testimony tonight relates to the DSS budget.**

ICF-MR PROVIDER FEE

We appreciate the effort to garner more revenue through expansion of the "provider fee" to agencies providing ICF-MR services for individuals with intellectual disabilities. However, it is unclear to us how the provider fee will be levied, whether or not a rate freeze continues to be in effect for the ICF-MR providers and whether or not these providers will receive a rate increase. The budget documents and implementer bill are inconsistent.

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For a number of years, ICF-MR providers have been subject to a freeze in their rates even though they have had increases in their costs to provide services. If the provider fee allows for rate increases, this would be welcome news. If the budget continues to freeze rates for ICF-MR providers they cannot meet their expenses.

COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENT/BOARDING HOME RATE FREEZE

As in previous years, this budget eliminates the “current services” rate increase for “Boarding Homes” that include DDS Community Living Arrangements. The cost to provide services hasn’t decreased – witness the added costs of plowing driveways, clearing roofs and heating group homes this past winter.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES REDUCTION OF 10%

The Governor’s budget cuts the DSS Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Employment Opportunities account by 10% stating that these Employment Opportunities services are “not essential to DSS’ core mission” (although they are included in a section of the budget called “Improving Workforce Viability.”) This is a program that supports individuals with disabilities in finding and keeping jobs.

COPAYS

The proposed \$3 copay for adults served by the HUSKY program is problematic. It reduces funding dramatically in the DSS and the DMHAS budgets. While the budget narrative describes copays as a reasonable approach to offset the cost of services to an expanded population, the impact falls directly on the consumers who will be dissuaded from seeking treatment and to the providers who will have to absorb the cuts.

The list of services exempt from the copay requirement is very small. What about those services provided on a daily basis such as methadone maintenance? What does the “alternative benefit package” look like? What are the proposed “rate changes?”

Thank you for the opportunity of testifying. We look forward to working with your Committee in developing modifications to the budget that support people with disabilities.