

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
February 22, 2012
In opposition to proposed cuts to the DMHAS Budget – HB 5014
Catherine Kriss
Second Wind Clubhouse

Good evening Members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Catherine Kriss and I currently receive mental health services from CHR, (Community Health Resources) and CHR Second Wind Clubhouse in Enfield, CT. I have been a CHR client for six years. When I learned about the \$14.5 million proposed cut to the DMHAS Budget, I was very alarmed. DMHAS funds my provider, CHR!

CHR is my lifeline. Currently, I work as a part-time stipend secretary at the CHR Second Wind Clubhouse and am the newly founded Leadership Team Secretary there also. Outside of the Clubhouse in the Enfield Community, I serve on the Historical Society's Board of Directors, volunteer at the Food Shelf, am a lectern and usher at St. Patrick's Church and serve as the Field Representative for the Catchment Area Council, Region #17, of the North Central Regional Mental Health Board based in Newington. I could not serve in any of these capacities if it weren't for CHR. CHR has been instrumental in helping me find the education, courage, self-confidence to carry out all of my responsibilities, despite my illness, because it provides transitional housing programs like Respite, Northfield, and programs like the CHR Second Wind Clubhouse, as well as medication and Adult Outpatient services for people like me. In specific, CHR Northfield represents transitional living, and those residents, once they leave there, are able to function well in society once again, as I am testament to these very successful and worthwhile programs. Consequently, I live on my own with a roommate since January 2007. Likewise, CHR Northfield has helped many, many others over the years.

In summary, know that I am just one of the many success stories of CHR.

I implore you not to cut funding to DMHAS, and subsequently, CHR. There are too many well-balanced programs that CHR provides that are crucial to recovery and successful transitioning in life. Not just my Clubhouse, but many of our brother and sister Clubhouses in CT will be financially handicapped by this proposed cut!

In closing, I would like to extend a big thank you for everything you have done up to this point that keeps providers like CHR working, but I must ask that these programs and others like it continue to work as well as they do.

Thank you.