

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
February 22, 2012
In Opposition to proposed cuts to the DMHAS Budget - HB 5014
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Good evening Members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Gerard Duggan and my speech is about helping support funding for DMHAS as well as preventing any cuts to be made to its services and programs. I also have a mental illness that honestly takes a toll on me.

While I don't know too much about politics or economics, I do know about people and observation.

I know DMHAS is around to help people with mental health or addiction issues. I also know that when I look around Connecticut, I see a whole other world that many do not see. I will try to keep this short.

I see a lot of people walk the streets being very ill, and at times, homeless. I see people pushing shopping carts, attempting to get as much money as possible even if they're not homeless; they try to make do with what they got and still it's not enough. I see children take their own lives, inflicted by bullying in their schools. Nowhere is safe sometimes for kids and young adults. I see people unable to afford their medications, or having to go far and wide to receive only one medication. While at the same time other people can afford a lot of food with their food stamps and many other nice things. I see people prematurely leaving hospitals or institutions, because they either have no room or the places shut down due to lack of funding. I see people wandering around with awful symptoms. I see people doing drugs to relieve stress of daily living. I see people having very little to live on. People can barely afford housing such as apartments so they are forced to live with roommates. I see people not able to access good jobs or any jobs even after college.

I have seen a lot of wrongs even though the cuts haven't been made; this is only a taste of things that are already occurring. I can't imagine what would happen if the cuts are made to DMHAS. We do not need less, we need more. I am aware that things are tough but to make these cuts with things the way they are now would be disastrous. If you agree with me that these things need to be addressed then, I urge you to make the right decision in the end.

Thank you for your time!

Very truly yours,

Gerard Duggan