



February 22, 2012

Testimony on Raised Bill #5036: An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Legislative Program Review & Investigations Committee Concerning the Provision of Selected Services for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.

By Pam Fields, Executive Director

I would like to thank this committee for their support over the years. The provision of quality services for people with intellectual disabilities is imperative to their wellbeing, safety and overall happiness. I have read the Legislative Program Review & Investigations Bill and would like to comment on the section that speaks about the capacity to serve additional clientele in the private sector.

Data reveals the community providers have been underfunded for years, but it also shows that this underfunded system provides better outcomes than the state operated system. Assuring that the community providers remain whole and able to continue to provide vital services to the states most vulnerable citizens is vital, not only to those citizens but to the fiscal health of our State.

The community providers can handle all services required by the residents of Connecticut, "IF", and that word is the vital part of this statement, "IF" the services are **appropriately funded**. These services must be appropriately **funded each year**. And finally, funding levels must **reflect the changing needs** of the consumers.

It is important to note that services to people requiring severe interventions and intensive medical needs are being provided by the community sector at this time. The problem the providers face is that once a community provider agrees to take a person with complex needs, they are not guaranteed annualized funding to cover the cost of the services. If the state cuts these services one year after agreeing to fund them or fails to fund the increased needs (services under the state system are always funded), the community provider is left holding the financial bag.

Actions like these cause the providers to shy away from picking up services that will negatively affect their overall ability to survive financially and support the needs of those that they already work with every day. Continuing to add new services without appropriate funding over the life of the service is unsustainable.

These are the reasons why you may hear that the community providers have refused to provide services for some individuals. It is not because they cannot provide the service to a high quality, but that they do not trust the state to appropriately fund the service once the person is in their care.

The community providers will still show a huge cost savings for these individuals when they are properly funded. The state has said the community providers are their partners. If this is the case then the partnership should be an honest partnership, with integrity, and with a similar guarantee of resources available in the state system.

Thank you for your time on this vital issue. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at 860.302.3134