



**Energy and Technology Committee - Public Hearing Testimony
March 19, 2012
SB 447- An Act Modernizing the State's Telecommunication Laws**

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Year after year the Clifford Beers Clinic provides vital mental health services to thousands of children and family members in 32 towns of the Greater New Haven area as well administers over a dozen out-patient programs for children (aged 3-18) with behavioral problems. The ability of the Clifford Beers Clinic to be affective in changing lives relies on the ability of a families to reach out and contact us, which is why we support SB 447- An Act Modernizing the State's Telecommunication Laws.

One of the benefits that this Act will produce is the elimination of the price floor that prevents telecommunications companies from reducing prices below a certain level. The majority of children we serve come to us from lower income households, and need low cost telecom service options.

Clifford Beers Clinic operates in a highly regulated mental health care environment, which is necessary and beneficial in maintaining a high standard of care. However, outdated or redundant regulations are counter productive by draining resources of time, energy and money. The Clinic supports laws and regulations that promote competition and lessens paperwork. Ultimately this means lower costs for all especially our lower income community members, who will have not only lower telecom options but also better access to the care they need.

Access to lower cost communications tools could make the difference in saving a child's life. The Clinic's 24 hour emergency hotline serves thousands of individuals reaching out for help in dangerous and life threatening situations. Greater lower costs access to Internet and mobile phone service would also allow our patients to maintain contact with their counselor and reach out whenever they feel the need. Support and guidance are integral components of building healthy relationships and mental health treatment.

I urge you to stand up for the safety and future of Connecticut's children and consider these points when you are deciding on the merits of the Telecom Modernization Act. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Alice M. Forrester, PhD
Executive Director