

**PUBLIC HEARING RE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

Sara Krolkowski  
February 15, 2013

To the members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Sara Krolkowski and I am testifying today to request that you support the increase of funding for DMHAS Young Adults Services in the Governor's Proposed Budget.

I am currently 24 years old and I am a recipient of mental health services in New Britain, CT through Connecticut Mental Health Affiliates (also known as CMHA). It has been my experience that without the recovery-oriented and person-centered support that I receive through DMHAS Young Adult Services, I would not have had the opportunity to become the independent and confident person that I am today.

The onset of my illness occurred after graduating with my Bachelors in Criminal Justice, during which time I engaged in self-destructive behaviors, like over-dosing on pills and trying to commit suicide. Before qualifying for DMHAS Young Adult Services I spent way too many birthdays, Christmases and thanksgivings with out my family in out-of-state group-homes.

Finally, I began receiving services through DMHAS Young Adult Services, and with the support that I received from the amazing staff at CMHA, I not only realized that I needed to change, but I was also empowered to accept the services that were available through the organization.

I see the outcomes for older adults with a mental health diagnosis who did not have access to the developmentally appropriate services that are available to a select group of young adults with serious and persistent mental illness of today's generation. While I attend psychosocial programming offered through CMHA, it is scary to think that the opportunity of recovery will not be available to my peers. Essentially, without increasing the DMHAS Young Adult Service budget, we will continue to neglect the thousands of young people within our state who are denied access to DMHAS YAS because the program is unable to support any additional young people with their current budget.

I guess that it would be a fairly logical assumption, given today's economic climate, to conclude that DMHAS YAS needs to just work with what they have and find more efficient ways of providing support to their clients. I am here to share with you that based on my observations the staff of CMHA are working diligently to meet the comprehensive needs of the young people that are currently enrolled and seeking to enroll in the program.

Throughout my time as a service recipient, I have received highly comprehensive support through CMHA and the goals that I developed with my case manager reflect my individual needs. The support that I have needed to achieve recovery has involved, supportive housing, budgeting and daily living skills development, medication management, psychosocial education, and the highlight of DMHAS Young Adult Services, recreational activities.

Now I live on my own and attend CMHA were I go to therapy and have a case manger I attend groups also. I played sports all my life I'm just starting to enjoy them again. I'm becoming more stable I still have my ups and down but with DBT and other skill I'm learning how to cope with anxiety ans stressors I'm feeling a little safer.

I believe we need to support the increase in funding for the DMHAS Young Adult Services to make the opportunity of recovery available to all young people in the State of Connecticut. In conclusion, I respectfully request that you help all young people succeed in their ambition of recovery.

Thank you.

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