

Good Afternoon, My name is Josie Robles, Chief Executive Director of Hartford Behavioral Health. HBH is a private, non-profit community agency that was founded in 1978. For over thirty- three years, the agency has provided outpatient mental health, substance abuse treatment services primarily for residents of the city of Hartford, Connecticut and the immediate surrounding towns. HBH offers medication evaluation and management, individualized treatment, group therapy, family involvement and continuing care. We have collaborated with state departments, private foundations and traditional and nontraditional providers to effectively serve and support our clients who are primarily classified as severely and persistently mentally ill. We also have extensive experience providing in home children's behavioral health services. The agency has two locations in Hartford (the North and South ends) and serves a poverty-stricken client population who are mostly Latino and African American. HBH maintains the following:

- Licensure by the Department of Public Health
- Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations: JCAHO
- Board of Directors, which also has consumer participants.

Hartford Behavioral Health's mission is to provide mental health services to Hartford area residents by providing the highest quality and culturally competent services in a cost-effective manner. Hartford Behavioral Health's vision is to continue its leadership role in the development and delivery of holistic health services to the residents of communities within the greater Hartford area. Over the years, HBH has contributed to the discussions regarding addressing disparities and in particular, health disparities. It has been our experience and as is well documented, the population we serve, has high rate of no show for attending outpatient clinics. It is also well documented that lack of access to quality care among others, is one known factor in racial and ethnic health disparities.

Agencies' such as HBH is committed to identifying and pursuing opportunities to ensure that lack of access to care does not continue to be a barrier for individuals in need of services. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to have the resources, support and infrastructure to sustain achievements to date. It is our position that reducing resources that is critical to maintaining the level of access to care for our population will significantly affect the traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised. The potential impact of reducing critical resources is grave. I encourage all to consider Kathleen G. **Sebelius**, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, statement, "It is time to **refocus, reinforce, and repeat** the message that **health disparities exist** and that **health equity** benefits **everyone**."

Thank you for your time.

