YALE-NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL

February 18, 2013

Appropriations Committee Testimony
Legislative Office Building, Room 2702
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

To whom it may concern:

On behalf of Yale-New Haven Hospital, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Appropriations Subcommittee for their hard work and for allowing me the opportunity to voice my opinion on such a critical budgetary decision that will affect thousands of Connecticut constituents and businesses. As a board member, I am imploring the Appropriations Subcommittee to fund the highly successful STRIVE program.

The STRIVE program has provided a 400% return on investment for Connecticut Tax Payers with over 300 graduates placed into full-time employment. They have an 80% placement record with nearly 90% of our clients keeping their jobs after 2 years! STRIVE (Support and Training Result In Valuable Employees) is not a traditional occupational skills training or academic enrichment classroom program. It is an in-your-face, attitudinal adjustment, experiential learning program that confronts and addresses individual behaviors that prohibit workplace success. The majority of the clients are ex-offenders who have few options for training and placement. The program is operated in Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven.

STRIVE recognizes that many people have never gained the foundational "soft skills" to succeed at the first jobs that lead to greater growth. Inability to work cooperatively, handle criticism, or successfully navigate the myriad of spoken and unspoken expectations in any workplace have often meant people lose job after job without understanding why -- or how -- to change.

STRIVE therefore delivers a personalized and practical introduction to the world of work itself. Serving any Connecticut resident who chooses to participate, regardless of skill level, incarceration history, STRIVE shows outstanding results compared to other employment and training programs, while operating at a fraction of the cost.

I can tell you personally, as a major employer in CT, that we have employed many STRIVE graduates. We have found their graduates to have a solid appreciation for expectations and standards of behavior required in the workplace. Very few, if any, other work preparation programs provide such a solid and relevant preparation for this population.

With an extremely lean budget, and a proven track record of success, it would be foolish to cut a program that yields such high results. I understand that many tough decisions need to be made, and I do not envy your position. With a low cost, high impact program such as STRIVE, I believe it would be extremely unwise to cut their funding. Additionally, any cut to STRIVE may affect the federal awards that the program receives to provide complimentary services. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to fight to keep STRIVE in the budget. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact me at 203-688-5095 with any questions or concerns you might have.

Sincerely,

Nancy E. Collins, Director
Recruitment & Staffing

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