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**NORTHWEST  
REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH BOARD, INC.**

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Central Naugatuck Valley Catchment Area Council #20  
Housatonic Mental Health Catchment Area Council #21  
Northwest Mental Health Catchment Area Council #22

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Testimony before the Human Services Committee  
By Janine Sullivan-Wiley  
Executive Director, Northwest Regional Mental Health Board, Inc.  
February 26, 2013  
Re HB 6367 AAC Governor's HS Implementer  
and its recommendation to eliminate the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Committee

Good day to Senators Slossberg, Coleman, and Markley; and Representatives Abercrombie and Stallworth and all of the members serving on this committee. I would especially like to recognize those legislators who serve our region: Sen. Markley, and Representatives Butler and Cook. Thank you for your time and attention.

My name is Janine Sullivan-Wiley, and I am the Executive Director of the Northwest Regional Mental Health Board. The Regional Boards represent the grassroots and all of the stakeholders of mental health and substance abuse services. We conduct evaluations and assess the unmet needs for behavioral health services in our communities. We work to address stigma against people with behavioral health disorders, noting that stigma is a barrier to treatment and recovery. We try to assure that policy and funding decisions are consistent with what we see at the local and regional levels.

Which is why I am here today. I understand that included in the Governor's budget is the **elimination of the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Committee**. I urge you to **NOT** do that.

**I have served as a legislative appointee on that committee since April 2011, and I have seen firsthand what the impact of the work of that committee has been. I strongly support its continuation.** This Council brings together key players from many behavioral health organizations serving children and serving adults, family members, people in recovery and advocates in a common oversight mission:

- **Holding Value Options accountable.** Considering that they are themselves responsible for many millions of the states dollars, that is valuable oversight, indeed.
- **Holding *three* state agencies accountable:** DSS, DCF and DMHAS.

When the Affordable Care Act is fully implemented, I expect that even more citizens in this state will be covered under Medicaid, and the dollars and covered lives impacted will only grow.

Through the general meetings and sub-committees, **a great amount of highly effective work is done.** It is my impression that the funding involved is not great. **Unless you have a different mechanism in mind to assure this accountability, I urge you to maintain the funding that enables this committee to do its work.**

Thank you.