

Testimony for Public Hearing  
Appropriations Committee  
2/14/2014

My name is Elaine Burns and I am the mother of brain injury survivor Ryan Cornell. Ryan was 18 years old, hiding beer on a ledge when his friends lost their grip on him as they were pulling him back in - he fell five stories.

After the prognosis of death or vegetative state for the rest of his life, we were asked to harvest his organs when the time came.

The time never came - 6 months after his injury we brought him home, total care - unable to walk, talk, eat or speak. The only way we could care for him, and give him a chance to improve in the months and years to follow was through the services of the current ABI Waiver.

It seems to me that the State of Ct is heading on a very dangerous course with their proposal for a new ABI Waiver - is the new ABI Waiver less expensive per person than the current ABI Waiver?

Is this cost so significant that the State of Ct has decided to put brain injury survivors like my son in nursing homes - let them languish there? Never improve and never get out of those institutions?

Or, is the cost of management and/or the 68 million dollar Federal Grant for the "State of Ct Balancing Incentive Payment Project" so alluring that if my son was injured with the new ABI Waiver in place, he would never stand beside me today.

DSS presented a number of changes last September, which were vehemently opposed to by families and survivors - instead of listening to us and improving and expanding the current ABI Waiver, they have now created a new Waiver. This is what will now occur -

1 - The current ABI Waiver dies - promising us we are "grandfathered in" to a Waiver the state is killing off is insulting to families and survivors.

3 - Interestingly - there is now a SIGNIFICANT increase in the level of difficulty to get a key staff position approved/filled on the current ABI Waiver

- THIS IS THE KEY POSITION DSS TRIED TO ELIMINATE IN THEIR EARLIER PROPOSAL.
- DSS is destroying this position without being transparent about it! New procedures, amendments and regulations are destroying this position.

- Everything families and survivors already said no to are being forced upon us in a completely non-transparent manner - please put the money for the new waiver into the current waiver - expand it and enhance it - this is what families and survivors have asked for, for years - why go against everything we want and need?

Thank you -

Elaine Burns

Mom to Brain Injury Survivor Ryan Cornell

President

Brain Injury Support Network