



**TESTIMONY OF Ingrid Gillespie, Regional Action Council Director,  
President, Connecticut Prevention Network**

**CONCERNING**

**HB 5030- AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE  
FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2015.**

**Appropriations Health & Hospitals Subcommittee Hearing, February 18, 2014**

My name is Ingrid Gillespie and I am Director of the Lower Fairfield County Regional Action Council (LFCRAC) covering the communities of Greenwich, Stamford, Darien and New Canaan. I am also President of the Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN) which is an association of the state's 13 community partnership Regional Action Councils (RACs) that work to provide every community in Connecticut with education, training and advocacy for substance abuse prevention and mental health promotion across the lifespan.

In my capacity as President of CPN I want to offer testimony concerning the budget and the need for additional funding for regional action councils CPN receives about \$300,000 or \$14k- 28k per RAC to implement the federal Partnership for Success (PFS) grant. On June 30, 2014, the PFS grant is set to expire, severely hampering the ability of RACs to provide evidence-based, outcome-driven prevention planning, which is an integral part of the RAC function. The PFS grant is awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and administered by the Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.

***Potential Impacts of Lost Funding:***

**Staffing**

- Reduced hours for some staff and elimination of some positions directly linked to ensuring quality standards for the essential functions listed below
- Reduced resources to support the maintenance of key community relationships critical to:
  - ensuring comprehensive qualitative and quantitative data collection
  - engagement of key community members in the data analysis
  - implementation of data-driven, evidence-based prevention strategies

### **Data Collection and Evaluation**

- Reduced capacity for collection and analysis of data critical to informing and evaluating prevention activities throughout the State
  - Fewer surveys and focus groups of youth and adult community members
  - Reduced staffing resources to provide technical assistance to Local Prevention Councils for local data analysis and development of effective data presentations used to drive community change through evidence-based, outcome-driven prevention planning
  - Reduced resources to support creation of regional epidemiologic profiles required by DMHAS to provide planning data to state and local communities Note: These data in these profiles is used by youth and adults service providers, RACs and other community institutions such as schools, Faith based communities, Shelters for the homeless and others for grant applications

### **Programming**

- Elimination of local public awareness efforts such as comprehensive media campaigns created by RACs
- Reduction of training programs offered by RACs to local communities
  - Mental Health First Aid /Youth Mental Health First Aid Training
  - Professional development for prevention professionals and service provider professionals working with youth to older adults throughout the state
  - Current Drug Trend Awareness Training

### ***Solution:***

The Connecticut Prevention Network requests an additional \$300,000 from the Pre-Trial Account be included in the FY 2015 budget (See P.A. 13-184, Sec. 30). Note that this funding does not come out of the General Fund. Without this funding, much needed prevention staff and resources will be lost leaving a gap in providing data and services to local communities wanting to strengthen substance abuse prevention efforts and promote mental health across the lifespan.

Ingrid Gillespie  
President , Connecticut Prevention Network and Director, LFCRAC  
115-125 Main Street,  
Stamford, CT 06901  
Email: [rac@liberationprograms.org](mailto:rac@liberationprograms.org) Ph: 203-391-7914