

March 28, 2014

Appropriations & Human Services Committees Public Hearing

1915(c) HOME & COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES WAIVER, CT ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY
WAIVER II APPLICATION

Carrie Kramer, Brain Injury Services Director
Brain Injury Alliance of CT

Good afternoon. My name is Carrie Kramer and I am the Brain Injury Services Director at the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut (BIAC), a family member of a brain injury survivor, and a very concerned Connecticut resident.

I have purposely crafted a brief testimony, as there are many individuals here providing feedback and your committees must deliberate on this important application.

For too long, I have heard countless stories from individuals living with the consequences of a brain injury and their family members about the inability to access the current Waiver due to an ever-growing waitlist.

BIAC continues to provide this legislature, as well as the community at large, with thoughtful and direct feedback about our concerns regarding the lack of accountability with the current Waiver, as well as significant concerns related to implementation of ABI Waiver II, if passed. Please refer to BIAC's position statement, attached to this testimony.

We have also offered numerous and specific suggestions regarding proactive changes that Department of Social Services can implement to provide more safeguards for Waiver participants (including mandated background checks for all agency and independent providers of services) creating transparency for

notification of changes, and opportunities for increased training of service providers – just to name a few.

The Connecticut legislature should increase the funding for the ABI Waiver to entirely eliminate the waitlist. Then, we can all move forward in partnering with DSS to create a sustainable program that meets the needs of its participants with support and input from survivors, family members and providers.

BIAC also opposes the current plan to reserve slots for DMHAS consumers in the first year of the Waiver and urges that this legislature consider those that have been waiting for services under the current waiver – regardless of the potential “cost savings” for the state. This is the ONLY WAY to ensure equal access for all individuals on the waitlist.

Yes, there are numerous flaws with the ABI Waiver II application – much of what you have already heard and will continue to hear today. However, I am compelled to support the ABI Waiver II application because it will open up services for more individuals living with brain injury that have been unnecessarily been waiting for years.

Thank you for your consideration.