

Trinity College
HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

March 28, 2014

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Testimony

Sarah Raskin

Good evening Chairpersons and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Sarah Raskin and I am a neuropsychologist and faculty member at Trinity College. My work involves research into ways to improve the lives of people with brain injury. I have had the honor of facilitating a support group through the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut for 15 years and am currently serving on the Board of Directors. I would like to submit testimony in support of **1915(C) HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES WAIVER, CT ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY WAIVER II APPLICATION.**

Over the past 20 years, I have witnessed services for people with brain injury dwindle. Twenty years ago the average stay for on a rehabilitation hospital unit for person after a traumatic brain injury was six months. It is now 20 days for acute care and 30 days for rehabilitation care. After this time, there are still many significant issues of health and safety for people with brain injury. Considerable care may be required, not just for physical deficits but for cognitive and emotional needs. These may include memory loss, lack of

attention, impulsivity or poor initiation, trouble planning or emotional changes such as depression or anxiety.

The evidence clearly indicates that the best place for most people with brain injury is in their home. However, the common changes associated with brain injury can mean that considerable care and supervision is needed in the home. This is not only for optimal health but for basic safety. The people effected by brain injury include children, veterans, mothers, fathers, and other hard-working people.

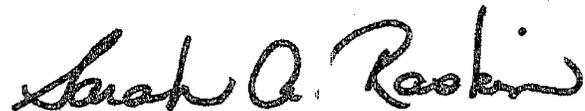
Twenty years ago the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut filed a Class Action Lawsuit against the State of Connecticut and the ABI Medicaid Waiver was created to help provide services for these people to stay in the community. The Waiver has provided life-saving services to many people, although the waiting time is still much too long for many people. In addition, I continue to have concerns about the level of training and licensing procedures regarding people who providers. At the very least, it makes sense for them to be in a profession that ensures adequate knowledge and training of brain injury and that falls under the purview of a state licensing agency. In order to allow for safe and appropriate care, these providers must be compensated properly.

I have worked with many brain injury survivors who have benefitted from the ABI Waiver. I have worked with many others who

have been unable to obtain services due to the long wait list. This has caused them to bankrupt their families paying for services or to live in unsafe conditions.

As veteran's return from combat, an aging population experiences strokes and falls, and rates of motor vehicle related injuries continue to climb I support the current recommended Waiver II but urge you to ensure that as many people as possible can be served as quickly as possible.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah A. Raskin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah A. Raskin, Ph.D. ABBP/ABCN
Department of Psychology and Neuroscience Program