

February 13, 2014

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and the members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Lee Fallet. I am a Connecticut resident and Mental Health Occupational Therapist and Rehabilitation Counselor with 29 years of experience across the service delivery spectrum. I am currently employed in the outpatient Psychiatric Department of a Community Hospital, service on the Board of Directors for a Community Mental Health Agency and am a member of NAMI-CT.

I would respectfully ask you to consider the following with regard to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) budget.

Please consider the **reinvestment of savings** from congregate care reductions into a **full array of community services** that foster rehabilitation, integration and promote good outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Please consider **reinstating the funding** to a bill that was passed in 2010 (codified in Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-62a) which appropriated \$1 million to DCF to implement **the homeless youth program**. The purpose of this program was to establish two regional teams to provide outreach to youth who experience homelessness, to include youth drop-in centers with walk-in access to crisis interventions and ongoing supportive services (part of the Reaching Home Campaign's homeless youth work). The program was never started due to funding being removed via deficit mitigation in 2011.

In support of the Program Review and Investigation (PRI) report *DCF Services to Prepare Youth Aging Out of State Care's* recommendations, please consider the **reinvestment of some of DCF's savings**, e.g., from the reduction of residential care programs funding, into **transition planning specialists** to promote better transitions for youth .

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Fallet, MA, CRC, OTR/L