



March 14, 2014

To the co-chairs and ranking members of the Public Health Committee; Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Senator Welch, and Representative Srinivasan,

I am providing this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 433 An Act Concerning the Licensing Process for Community Providers.

I am the Chief Executive Officer of Wellmore Behavioral Health, a regional behavioral health and substance abuse provider serving 49 towns in Northwest CT, employing close to 300 professional and paraprofessional staff, and operating 13 service locations. We have moved through the licensing processes for the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services as well as Department of Public Health too many times to list, and am very intimately acquainted with the processes at each of the said State agencies. Having to interact with several, discrete, and separate entities to obtain and maintain our licenses is not only inefficient, but it is a drain on our limited agency resources, staff time, and a significant disruption to client care with regard to the delivery of direct services. It is paramount to develop a single and uniform licensing process for community behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, and human service providers in CT that supports efficiency, uniform standards, and promotes high quality and ethical practice across State licensing entities who in turn license individual community behavioral health providers. This must include a single application process that replaces the current practice of needing to submit multiple applications to multiple state agencies on a every other year basis.

We believe that improved efficiency and fiscal savings can be achieved by creating a uniform licensing application that consolidates the requirements for DCF, DMHAS, DSS and DPH licensing, in which many of these said requirements are duplicative and are currently required to report, in duplication, to separate and distinct State agencies. Examples of these shared elements may be documents related to organizational descriptions and overview, budgets, bylaws, Board of Directors, and Certificates of Incorporation.

By employing a uniform licensing process, unnecessary duplication of documents submitted can be eliminated, the licensing process can become more streamline and business friendly, and on-site visits can be consolidated and more productive.

We thank you for your time and hope that you will act favorably with regard to the passage of SB 433. I am available for any further questions at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Gary Steck, LMFT

Chief Executive Officer