

March 28, 2014

Appropriations & Human Services Committees

**1915(C) HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES WAIVER, CT ACQUIRED
BRAIN INJURY WAIVER II APPLICATION.**

Rachel Callan, Brain Injury Specialist

Brain Injury Alliance of CT

Good-Morning Chairpersons and members of the Appropriations & Human Services Committees. My name is Rachel Callan, Brain Injury Specialist, at the Brain Injury Alliance of CT (BIAC). This testimony is in support of the Acquired Brain Injury Medicaid Waiver II. I ask that you say yes to the DSS application for the ABI Waiver II. While the application is deeply flawed, its enactment would provide essential services to allow those with brain injuries, allowing them their basic right to live independently with their own families and circles of support.

According to the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, about 1.7 million sustain a TBI in the United States every year. Approximately 5.3 million people live with a disability caused by TBI in the United States alone.

In Connecticut, the average is 22 people every day, 8,000 every year. The current waiver allows access to home and community based services to a total of 369 individuals with an additional 49 on the waitlist. However, the 49 individuals on that waitlist may not receive services for up to 4 years. As such, BIAC strongly supports the introduction of a new waiver, as a step towards fully supporting individuals with brain injuries in Connecticut. Without the Waiver, people will remain institutionalized on a lengthy wait list. Evidence has shown us again and again as we work with this population, that in the state of Connecticut, the long term care

facilities are seriously underprepared to provide specialized brain injury care to persons with incredibly unique circumstances. Reducing the individual cost cap from 200% to 150% will necessitate more individuals losing the option to live in their homes forcing them to reside in institutions in violation of the Olmstead Act.

Support this Waiver with the following additions:

- That information about the Waiver and application is user-friendly and fully accessible.
- That criminal background checks be mandatory for all professionals liaising with the brain injury population including but not limited to Neuropsychologists, Cognitive Behaviorists, an ILST's
- That DSS provide specific , structure and mechanisms for training providers, with structures for funding and additional licensure requirements that are clear and accessible to users

Members of our community with brain injuries have little voice in the decisions made about their care. We demand a clear public input process so their voices can be heard. On behalf of all those touched by brain injury I am asking you to revise this Waiver to allow equal access and benefit of individuals with brain injuries.

Thank you for your time and attention

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