



**Testimony before the Human Services Committee
March 11, 2014**

**SB 408, AAC MENTAL HEALTH OPTIONS FOR ADULT MEDICAID
RECIPIENTS**

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Senator Slossberg and Representative Abercrombie and members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Luis B. Perez and I am the President and CEO of the Mental Health Association of Connecticut, Inc. (MHAC). MHAC was established in 1908, the first private nonprofit dedicated to service, education and advocacy for people experiencing mental health disabilities. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to testify in support of SB 408, AA Concerning Mental Health Options for Adult Medicaid Recipients. MHAC serves over 1,100 persons with severe and persistent mental illnesses. The vast majority are adult Medicaid recipients.

The bill would add Psychologists in private practice to Medicaid as an optional service for recipients age 21 or older. However, we support having Licensed Clinical Social Workers included as well. We know all too frequently the LCSW is the provider of choice for the people we serve. LCSW's are more accessible and affordable for persons living on limited incomes.

The reason we support the bill is access and choice. It will offer both to the HUSKY C & D recipients. Currently LCSWs in private practice are Medicaid providers only for HUSKY A & B. For adults getting an appointment in a clinic can mean weeks wait, not all clinics are conveniently located and not everyone wants to utilize a clinic. With the ACA enrolling and providing so many more Medicaid adults, access to mental health care will be even harder to acquire if provider status is not approved for psychologists and LCSWs in private practice.

In 2013 there were 1,912 licensed psychologists in CT and 5,828 licensed clinical social workers. And unlike some professional providers a survey of 167 LCSWs found that 62% wanted to be Medicaid providers and another 25% would consider it.

Thank you.