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Written Testimony for the Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Health and Hospitals

Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony addressing the proposed cuts to the Connecticut Mental Health Center component of the DMHAS budget. I ask you to restore the support for clinical and research programming at CMHC.

The Connecticut Mental Health Center provides outstanding clinical and research programming that is critical to the state and indeed to some of the Governor's new initiatives outlined in his budget. One key initiative, for example, is legislation intended to make Connecticut a Second Chance Society. These programs include removing minimum sentences for nonviolent crimes, and making drug possession a misdemeanor. Programs to reverse opiate overdose are also being implemented. While these change will have benefits, they will fall short if we do not attend to the treatment needs of those with psychiatric illness and drug dependence and to the need to develop more effective treatments for those who do not respond fully to current treatments.

The CMHC plays a vital role in the community by serving so many individuals with severe mental illness and substance use disorders and by partnering with numerous agencies, organizations and institutions to deal with some of the most challenging public health problems we face. In fulfilling this mission of research and clinical service, the CMHC has had strong support from members of the New Haven delegation, especially Representatives Dillon, Candelaria and Walker.

In addition to providing critical access to treatment, **research at the CMHC has led to innovative new treatments** including:

- Programs aimed at the early detection and specialized treatment of individuals with psychotic disorders, including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.
- New ways to treat depression and schizophrenia including an antidepressant that may shorten response times from several months to several hours and reduce the risk of suicide.
- Medications for the treatment of alcohol dependence and opiate dependence.

And the CMHC Division of Law and Psychiatry conducts ground-breaking work to addresses the challenge of criminal behavior committed by the mentally ill.



Another objective of the Governor's plans for Connecticut in the upcoming year is **economic development**. Funding provided to CMHC supports this objective many times over.

- **For each dollar invested by the State of Connecticut, CMHC research programs generate more than \$7 in federal grants** (\$24 million annually in grants and contracts). These grants generate important Connecticut jobs. Indirect costs generated by federal grants to CMHC research programs generate approximately \$900,000 for the Connecticut General Fund; these funds would be lost if research programs collapsed in the wake of the proposed cuts.
- CMHC research programs have been a **magnet for investment in Connecticut**, drawing Pfizer to locate its Clinical Research Unit in New Haven, across the street from CMHC.
- CMHC research programs have **spun off biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies**.

Cuts to the CMHC Budget: Governor Malloy has been a strong advocate for mental illness treatment and biotechnology. However, the new budget would signal an end to the successful DMHAS-Yale collaboration in CMHC as we know it.

- It would lead to the elimination of psychiatrists treating over 500 patients and **would limit access to psychiatric care among low-income residents**.
- Proposed cuts to the CMHC research program would eliminate funding that supports essential core resources that cannot be charged to federal grants and contracts. These cuts would cause the loss of nearly 100 CMHC clinical and research staff, trainees, and researchers. **Loss of this funding would have devastating effects on these research programs**, from which they would be unlikely to recover. It would dramatically diminish CMHC's contributions to advances in treatment. **Loss of grants will translate into lost revenue going into the general fund**.
- Further, the CMHC missions are inseparable. **Cutting research eliminates the contributions of research faculty to teaching and patient care**.

In Summary: The proposed CMHC budget cuts would devastate its clinical and research programming. CMHC is a critical community resource, a flagship of the DMHAS system, a national model, and an engine for the Connecticut economy. The research mission of CMHC has drawn generations of international leaders in psychiatry, psychology, and neuroscience to serve those with mental illness in Connecticut. It is essential to preserve the integrity of the CMHC mission by restoring its funding

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