

March 22, 2015

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to urge you **to stop the cuts to DDS, restore DDS Funding and fund the DDS Waiting list.** .

Our 14 year old son is a DDS client and has been receiving **VSP Services** since October 2014. We need these services. They are crucial to Chris' health and well being. Without them I am sure we would have visited Emergency Medical Services, the Police and/or DCF for crisis care. He has I/DD, limited verbal skills, dangerous behavior, & epilepsy. He cannot dress himself, count to 20 or write his full name. He has no play dates, is not toilet trained, and our family and friends cannot care for him. We adopted our adorable 10 month old son through DCF unaware of the challenges that lay ahead of us. He requires 24 hour care, one to one assistance in all areas of daily living, medications and a safe home. VSP currently provides In Home Support through The Arc of New London County and a Behaviorist to work on toileting and his extreme behavior challenges.

Chris' Dad just turned 60 last year. I am now 58. Last year my doctor recommended that I have surgery with a 4 – 6 week recovery. I said "I can't, I don't have enough help." Once we got VSP up and running I was able to schedule it. We got extra funding for additional help & I am now completing the recovery phase. VSP made it possible for me to take care of myself. My husband now has a hernia from caring for us. He will have that surgery April 1st but we will have no extra funding to pay for more VSP In Home Support while he recovers. Our case manager said "No, we are not accepting any new requests for funding." That is a sad statement. We have committed to care for Chris and must do it. How can you turn your backs on us? We need help to care for our son and to keep moving forward together.

One more story for you... this is what happened when we didn't have help. Chris was having a tough day. Our In Home Support staff person called out sick. I was trying to cook hot dogs and beans for dinner. We had to get Chris away from the hot stove. Dad took his iPad into the next room hoping that Chris would follow him. Chris got MAD! He threw the unopened can of baked beans at his father and it smacked him in the head! It was very shocking & painful! Having staff there to monitor Chris would have made a big difference. I have heard that new clients are being turned away from VSP while you work out the budget. Think about what those families are experiencing while you deliberate. **We need VSP.**

We worry constantly about Chris' future. Will DDS provide the services he requires? What happens when we are no longer able to care for him? Would you choose to live with these responsibilities?

Thank you for your consideration. My family and I anxiously await your decision.

Sincerely,

Betsie Danforth

Stonington, CT