

## **Testimony to Appropriations Committee**

### **Opposition to cuts in DMHAS Budget**

**3/6/15**

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Carolyn Goodridge. I am a social worker who has worked in Child Welfare all my life, and I also am a member of NAMI and several mental health coalitions. I am concerned that after the support for mental health needs in last year's legislative session, the Governor's budget has cut so many of the mental health services from his budget.

I am opposed to the cut to legal services by eliminating \$450,000 from the CT Legal Rights Project. That group has provided housing advocacy that has saved the state money by avoiding unnecessary hospitalization costs such as an emergency room visit costing \$2,152. The cut would reduce staff by 50% undermining CLRP's capacity to represent on other issues as well.

I am also opposed to the \$585,000 Cut to the Regional Mental Health Boards. This cut would eliminate these Boards. With an average of 2 staff each, these boards mobilize over 500 volunteers collectively. The board's collaboration brings in \$23 million in federal funds to the state. These unique agencies have been a vital liaison between the state, local communities and providers to assess needs, evaluate services and educate communities on the range of mental health opportunities.

Please do not allow these cuts to vital services.