

Dear Senator Bye and Representative Walker,

I am a psychiatrist working at the Connecticut Mental Health Center and would like to convey my strong opinion that the proposed cuts to the CMHC budget would be detrimental to the Center, the New Haven and surrounding communities, and to future partnerships with the Yale community and federal/ private organizations that CMHC has historically worked with on clinical initiatives.

I completed my residency training at Yale and saw firsthand that the CMHC remained a bedrock of clinical and social support to those with chronic mental health needs, very often preventing frequent hospitalization, use of emergency services, and medical comorbidity. In addition, the CMHC has led initiatives around healthy food, smoking cessation, exercise, and wellness that research has shown can make a lasting impact on a community for generations.

Currently, clinicians have growing caseloads and often go above and beyond their job description in order to provide excellent care to their patients. I can only imagine the impact of reducing resources even further. Those of us who work closely with individuals dealing with multiple psychosocial challenges recognize that options are limited for them. Without the clinical support of the CMHC, most of them would have nowhere else to turn. Additionally, CMHC has the ability to conduct world-class research in order to continue providing the best care possible and also contribute to the wider scientific community. The combination of real world clinical issues and cutting edge research results in a learning environment which attracts some of the brightest and most enthusiastic young minds in the field. I implore you to keep this in mind as an important investment in the future of mental health services in the state of Connecticut. As a person who has been a part of the CMHC system for the past five years, I cannot emphasize strongly enough the crucial impact that it has on the general health of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nitasha Shetty

3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District

New Haven, CT