



**TESTIMONY OF
Thomas J Steen, Executive Director, Capital Area Substance Abuse Council and
Member of the Connecticut Prevention Network**

CONCERNING

**GOVERNORS BUDGET FOR STATE EXPENDITURES IN THE FISCAL YEAR(S)
ENDING JUNE 30, 2017.**

DMHAS BUDGET HEARING: March 6, 2015

My name is Thomas J Steen and I am the Regional Action Director for the Capital Area Substance Abuse Council (CASAC) which serves the towns of Avon, Bloomfield, Canton, East Granby, Granby, Farmington, Hartford, Hartland, Newington, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Suffield, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Windsor, and Windsor Locks. On behalf of the Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN) I want to offer testimony for my opposition to the Governor's Budget regarding the Regional Action Council line item within the DHMAS Budget. **The proposed budget cut of \$736,000 will eliminate what has been the "fabric" of substance abuse/mental health prevention work to all 169 towns in Connecticut.**

If the current budget proposal were to go unchanged the following programs and services will be drastically reduced or eliminated:

Staffing

- Current paid staffing structures would be reduced and in some cases, part-time only.
- Modify RAC's ability to recruit and train an adequate volunteer work force which is a current strength of the RAC structure.

Data Collection and Evaluation

- Less capacity for collection and analysis of data critical to informing and evaluating prevention activities. The reduced ability to offer youth surveys will affect a key tool for developing effective prevention strategies.

- Lack of data analysis and development used to drive community change through evidence-based, outcome-driven prevention planning will weaken community resolve to solve local challenges.
- Reduced resources to support creation of regional epidemiologic profiles submitted to DMHAS that provides critical planning data for the federal block grant award. Note: **Without this data, the state could lose \$25 million in Federal Block Grant money the state now receives.**

Programming

- Local public awareness efforts such as Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) prevention media campaigns would be greatly affected.
- Comprehensive prevention services and trainings would be grossly reduced or eliminated.
- Current Drug Trend Awareness and Training eliminated.
- Annual Youth Leadership Development Conference would be eliminated.
- Suicide Prevention Training and program infrastructure reduced or eliminated.

Solution

The Connecticut Prevention Network requests funding be maintained or increased at the current level of \$1,100,000. Without this funding, much needed prevention staff and resources will be lost leaving a gap in providing data and services to all Connecticut communities looking to prevent substance abuse and other critical services through their Local Prevention Councils.

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