

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Honorable members of the Appropriations Committee:

I would like to thank you for providing this opportunity to speak today about the impact the proposed cuts to grant funds and Medicaid rates will have on me and my family. My name is Richard Gagne and I live in West Hartford. The outpatient behavioral health services I receive at Wheeler Clinic have prevented me from committing suicide. I have had 14 spinal surgeries and although I am on a non opiate pain medication, I am still in a 24/7 state of severe pain. The treatment I receive at Wheeler teaches me how to live mentally with the chronic pain. If these services close I shudder to think what I would do and, more importantly, what it would do to my wife and daughter if I were no longer able to control my mental stability. Please I respectfully request that you do all that you can to stop the proposed cuts to DMHAS grants and Medicaid rates. Individuals with behavioral health challenges need your help. I and my family need your help. Thank you.

**Richard T. Gagne, Jr.
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