

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Honorable members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Marianne Bacon and I live in Middletown, CT.

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 upon me and my family.

There came a time in my life when I was overwhelmed by miserable troubles. My eldest daughter, a successful graduate of NYU, law school, and a member of the Legal Bar association, was suffering from advanced alcoholism.

Day to day, night to night, for years, I never knew if each day would be her last. I called the local police countless times to request wellness checks on my daughter. She was found unconscious outside, or lying in her open doorway, unclothed, in the cold. I was trying to make sure that she and her pets were safe. Even in the most extreme dereliction, she clung to her pets. My daughter was in severe pain, despondent while in the throes of this disease.

My daughter and I are both citizens of the state of Connecticut. Our family has been impacted by addiction and benefitted from the mental health and addiction services covered by Husky/Medicaid insurance.

At times my daughter was unable to work and faltered several times. Before finding providers like those at Wheeler Clinic, she encountered one provider who seemed "burned out". This psychiatrist was not able to meet this severely ill patient respectfully and without disdain.

Her current mental health providers have given her virtuous support. These are health providers who genuinely care and not "just going through the motions". My daughter is now in long-term residential care and is finally able to feel hope.

For myself directly, my months of coming to Wheeler have brought me hope when I was nearly beyond hoping. I never expected to get the real "traction" on my issues that I have made. My therapist at Wheeler is superb and she makes a difference to people.

The culture of this agency is one of respect and genuine caring. When I see people of all kinds in the waiting room, especially young men and women, I feel thankful for this clinic and its quality. Some of the services I receive involve groups with citizens receiving the same valuable treatment.

I am aware that many, even most of the clients are depending on Medicaid insurance to be able to participate. Many families might suffer unnecessary pain and trouble if access to Wheeler Clinic was restricted. We would begin to see more bad things happen. It seems clear to me that more money would have to be spent to deal with those likely consequences.

If budget cuts are necessary, I urge you to try to discriminate between programs that are effective and ineffective. I hope that there will not be any cuts which reduce availability and accessibility to Wheeler Clinic.

Thank you,

Marianne Bacon