

Testimony for Public Hearing - Appropriations Committee
March 6, 2015

Maryanne Van Aken, Co-Chair
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Advocates for Substance Abuse Prevention

Governor's H. B. No. 6924 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2017, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED TO REVENUE.

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Representative Dillon and members of the Appropriations Subcommittee:

My name is Maryanne Van Aken and I represent Advocates for Substance Abuse Prevention, ASAP, our Local Prevention Council. I stand before you this evening to **OPPOSE the proposed budget cuts under the Governor's Bill No. 6824.**

**RESTORE REGIONAL ACTION COUNCIL FUNDING- PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS
RACs BY ALMOST 80%**

The Governor's proposed budget would cut the regional action councils from \$1.1 million in funding to at most \$233,899 which would equate to a 79% cut.

The Connecticut Prevention Network (CPN) is an association of the state's 13 community partnership Regional Action Councils (RACs) that work to provide every community in the state with education, training, and advocacy for substance abuse prevention and related community concerns such as behavioral health, violence, gambling, drunk driving, prescription drugs, opioids and suicide.

Most of the RACs would be unable to survive such a drastic cut! Despite leveraging other funding this would decimate the current system of regional action councils.

In Woodbury alone, our regional action council, the CNVRAC has been an integral force in the development of the following initiatives:

- Promotion & coordination of a comprehensive youth risk behavior and resiliency survey conducted with all students in grades 6-12 throughout Regional School District No.14
- Promotion & coordination of a district-wide youth-led analysis of local-level risk and protective factors affecting adolescent substance use, education, risk of suicide, bullying, safety, and other areas affecting health and wellness among young people

- Provided Grant Application technical assistance and oversight to ASAP: *Advocates for Substance Abuse Prevention*, the designated Local Substance Abuse Prevention Council for my community
- Promotion of Medication Drop Box campaign and DEA *Got Drugs?* disposal day, a cost-effective opioid deterrence measure
- Provide Mental Health First Aid Training to Administration and Staff of RSD 14
- Sub-regional and local training delivery: 40 Developmental Assets for Youth; Opioid Abuse Prevention Forum; Financial Wellness for Seniors and Problem Gambling Prevention Across the Lifespan; Local Prevention Council “101”; Local Prevention Council Capacity Building; Local Prevention Council TA: Prevention Strategies & Effective Service Delivery
- Development and dissemination of Opioid Overdose Wallet Card to prevent opioid overdose and deaths
- Coordination & Delivery of Innovative Media Campaign on Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention
 1. Parents’ Guide to Prescription Drug Abuse Inserts in weekly, monthly, and quarterly news publications
 2. Realtor Flyers Distribution to local Boards of Realtors
 3. Take Action! Postcard mailing to school district parents

In closing, I **OPPOSE the proposed budget cuts under the Governor’s Bill No. 6824.**

If the state budget eliminates regional action councils, these and countless other important prevention services and local-level supports will be lost. It is my hope that I have impressed upon you the gravity of this potential budget cut, so that we may preserve our prevention infrastructure, saving long-term costs and most importantly saving lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maryanne Van Aken, Co-Chair

Advocates for Substance Abuse Prevention, ASAP

Woodbury, CT