

**City of Derby
Bureau of Youth Services
1 Elizabeth Street
Derby, CT 06418**

March 6, 2015

Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is John Saccu and I am Director of Bureau of Youth Services for the City of Derby. The Bureau of Youth Services provides youth programming, mental health services, and diversion programs working collaboratively with BHcare's, Greater Valley Substance Abuse Action Council. At this time I would like to ask you to restore funding for the Regional Action Councils.

I have worked closely with BHcare's, Greater Valley Substance Abuse Action Council for many years in providing substance abuse prevention activities to the youth throughout our community. I know first-hand the many valuable initiatives this regional action council has implemented that have made an impact on reducing substance abuse and improving mental health in our community:

- Our local RAC is the only source of student survey data and regional data profiles that we rely on to leverage additional funding from both federal and state sources.
- By administering Local Prevention Council funding, the RAC has enabled us to provide needed substance abuse education to our student population from kindergarten through 12th grade.
- The certified staff of our local RAC have trained educators, social workers, administrators, and public safety personnel in Mental Health First Aid.
- Our local RAC has trained hundreds of our high school students to recognize the signs and symptoms of suicide in their peers.

We have received valuable training through VSAAC on various topics related to substance abuse trends among youth in our community. The technical assistance we have received from VSAAC has helped us to achieve our mission. Again, I ask you to restore funding to the Regional Action Councils and not eliminate this crucial collaboration in our communities.

Respectfully Submitted,


John Saccu