

Dear Appropriations Committee Members,

March 6, 2015

My name is Nancy Urgell. I am an Advocate for ALL persons with a disability. I am here tonight because I disagree with the budget cuts that Governor Malloy has proposed to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services have five Regional Boards across the State. If all the boards are removed even after 40 years of experience, there will be a very large gap in the system. They are one of the "Watch Dogs" for all programs that support people with mental illness in the State.

In Connecticut there is a program called Medicaid for Employees with Disabilities (MED-Connect) the Regional Board has been promoting it. If a person has a disability, is working and paying federal income taxes they May qualify for MEDICAID without a SPEND DOWN. This is insurance and Not Money. This program has been in the DSS System ever since 1999. The Governor, The Lieutenant Governor, All the Commissioners as well as Senator Blumenthal know about this program because I told all of them Personally.

But some people in Connecticut have been kept in the DARK when it comes to this program and other programs for persons with mental illness. To learn about this vital program you can call 211 or go to the website: www.ct.gov/MED. But if you don't know what you are looking for the Regional Boards can help you find it.

Wouldn't it make more sense to hire the people with Disabilities and have them contribute to the State taxes rather than taking away necessary programs in the State that could possibly get them a job. I was hoping with this New Grant it would help people get a job as well as getting the word out about med-connect because this Grant will eventually be across the State. I found out recently that Husky A and D have been increasing BUT Husky C for the Elderly, Blind and the Disabled has "Flat lined" at 100,000 people. NO ONE wants to have a disability. But to take money out of the budget for these Regional Boards is a CRIME and IT IS DISCRIMINATION!