

2-10-15
me

My name is Craig Sears and I am a brain injury survivor receiving services on the ABI Waiver I Program. I have been an active and effective advocate for the brain injury survivor community and a participant in the Acquired Brain Injury ABI Waiver Program for several years. Without the services of this truly remarkable program I would probably be in an institution in prison or dead!

I am here today in support of Bill No. 6155 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MEDICAID WAIVER APPROVAL PROCESS. Currently, the State of CT does not inform, in a timely manner, Participants and Providers when they make changes to my services. They also do not inform someone like me, who has a brain injury, of proposed changes in a manner that is accessible to me! Recently DSS made changes that directly impact my life and my staff - I only learned about the last Public Hearing two days before it occurred. The State of CT must stop treating me and other brain injury survivors in this manner!

I support the following: Notice of proposed changes at least two months prior to a Public Hearing, via email and snail mail to participants, conservators and providers.

2. Major changes should require a Public Forum prior to holding a Public Hearing to gauge the public response and to give Legislators time to gather further information if there is strong ~~opposition~~. RESISTANCE

3. Public Comments allowed during the first 30 days after notification of changes is sent out.

4. No less than a 10 day notice (email and snail mail) of Public Hearings on changes.

Although this is not a notification issue, I have to say that it is clear the department of social services is going to eliminate Independent Living Skills Training and replace them with recovery assistant - which is not a rehabilitative model.

Not to mention that ILSTs are the heart of the program for brain injury survivors and a very important teaching service.

If CT takes away the only teaching ~~model~~ service for brain injury survivors you will see another class action lawsuit in CT because the service descriptions and mental health bias of ABI Waiver II is taken from the Mental Health model of services and are inappropriate for Brain Injury Survivors. I am not mentally disabled, but a proud brain injury survivor!

The changes coming from the implementation of ABI waiver II will force brain injury survivors into lesser quality services that put our lives in the community at great risk!

This is why Bill No. 6155 is so very import to all Participants and Providers that are involved in Medicaid Waiver Programs, please take my recommendations and include them in this Bill.

Craig Sears Member, Survivor CT Brain Injury Support Network