



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

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**Testimony by Patricia Rehmer, MSN, Commissioner of the
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Before the Aging Committee
March 3, 2015**

Good morning Senator Flexer, Representative Serra and distinguished members of the Aging Committee. I am Patricia Rehmer, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and I am here today to testify on SB 1004, An Act Concerning Senior Housing. I appreciate the committee's commitment to addressing this difficult issue and would like to thank the committee for addressing this issue as it applies to all persons with disabilities as opposed to only persons with behavioral health disorders.

Commissioner Klein and I met a few weeks ago to discuss this issue and to identify possible solutions. We evaluated many of the suggestions outlined in SB 1004 and in SB 888, a bill which was raised by the Housing Committee, to look at this issue as well.

We would like to respectfully request that if the bill moves forward, it includes representatives from the DMHAS, Departments on Aging and Development Disabilities, the Office for Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, and representation from the Independent Living Centers to broaden participation from other organizations that represent disability groups who currently live in elderly/disabled housing and are also on waiting lists for this housing.

In addition, we would also like to ensure that there is enough time to complete this study in a thorough manner. We would like to respectfully request that if the bill moves forward, you extend the reporting requirement in order for us to bring all the parties together and gather the necessary data.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I am happy to answer any questions you have at this time.