Community Health Services

To Whom It May Concern, 2/23/2015

I am writing this letter of support for Independence Unlimited. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker at Community Health Services in Hartford. I have had the pleasure of working with Sue Salters, Advocate at Independence Unlimited, over the past three years on more than one case.

As a clinician, I sometimes encounter patients with developmental delays of varying degrees. It is difficult to know how to help these patients to figure out a place to start in looking for help towards independence. I am so thankful that someone directed me to this wonderful agency. Sue and her staff have been of tremendous help to every client that I have referred. The patients that I speak of do not have the cognitive abilities to: complete applications for work, to attend traditional employment agencies, or navigate other complex social service agencies. Without the help of an advocate to guide them through these systems, these folks would be lost. Some people with disabilities have family that can help them to navigate these system and others do not. Even if they do have supportive family, the systems are complex and often require guidance from an agency such as Independence Unlimited. I don't know what we (social workers) would do if we didn't have agencies such as these to advocate for patients with developmental disabilities.

Please do not cut this critical funding!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Daigle, LCSW

Clinician / Behavioral Health

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To Whom It May Concern, 2/25/2015

My name is Lorna S. Mayne. The people where Sue works, Independence Unlimited, are nice people and they help people. Especially, Sue Salters, she is always helping me no matter what. She is very nice. Sue has taught me never to give up! People come from all over and ask for her help and she always takes good care of everyone. Sue is very patient with me and understanding. Also, Sue is very caring and thoughtful. She has been helping me for at least three to four years.

Please don't stop giving money to this important agency [Centers for Independent Living]. There are more people out there like me that need help. We need a lot of help.

Sincerely,

Lorna S. Mayne

Letter of Support

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Suzanne Garraffa. I am a consumer of Independence Unlimited and have been for a lot of years. I am also helping to raise funds for this organization because they help people with disabilities to stay in the community. If you decide to cut Independence Unlimited's budget we will have no other place to go and it will make it harder for us to survive. United Cerebral Palsy, which helped the disabled in the past, no longer exists in the Hartford area. If you take IU away too, where will we go next? Or is your goal to put us back in the nursing home because that's where we will end up if IU closes its doors. If we have to receive care in a nursing facility, it will cost the state a lot more than keeping IU in the budget. I feel the non-elderly disabled are always low on the totem pole when it comes to our needs being met. Whether its housing, social programming or recreational opportunities, we get overlooked. Help keep the doors of IU open to welcome people with disabilities into a place that does cares about us.

Sincerely,

Suzanne M. Garraffa

(dictated on Nov. 24, 2014)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to let you know that I feel any actions taken that would have a negative impact on agencies that serve individuals with disabilities such as Independence Unlimited, would be a very gross error on the part of elected officials whose duties include decisions regarding budgets and funding. While I do not live in Connecticut yet, Independence Unlimited staff members have been most helpful and responsive to my inquiries and questions regarding making a move from Long Island New York to another state such as Connecticut, which has quite a few differences in the way various benefits, programs, and services are delivered and received by individuals on low fixed incomes that require employment assistance, financial assistance, health insurance assistance, as well as medical and residential assistance.

I am a 54-year-old woman who has lived on Long Island all of her life. I have lived in a low income rent assisted section 8 apartment for over 30 years. It is most disturbing and distressing to see the changes in service agencies and programs available that I have always depended on for many needs that have allowed me to remain in my apartment and living as independently as possible. New York state has changed various regulations and guidelines regarding Medicaid, Medicare, and other insurance coverage that helped cover the costs of many programs and services. I have been strongly advised to consider leaving New York in order to find the services that I require. It seems that several states have changed their priorities from individuals with developmental disabilities that may be physical in nature, to delivering services to those who are intellectually or emotionally impaired. While, no individual with a disability denies the need for these programs to serve that population as well as senior citizens, individuals with physical disabilities are being made to feel that their needs are unimportant.

Individuals such as myself should not be forced to choose between community based services and residential services. The staff of Independence Unlimited have been trying very hard to meet the needs of those individuals with disabilities whose needs have been under served or ignored entirely. If I were to move I would require assistance in many areas and agencies such as Independence Unlimited (and UCP which now is closed.),provide invaluable service in trying to meet the needs of individuals with physical disabilities regardless of diagnosis or ethnic group, or even financial or health situations.

I am now forced to ask a question. If individuals with disabilities need to change their place of residence, where do they go to receive the assistance, programs and services they will need?

I looked into moving to Connecticut because I have family there and there is a service dog program available there. I was told by a friend and former coworker that an agency such as Independence Unlimited was available and willing to help assist me with the move and transition from state to state. I am now actively assisting in fund raising efforts to keep such agencies programs and services available. I understand that various states as well as the country as a whole are faced with difficult economic situations, but, any time financial problems arise, the first things to suffer cut backs or even elimination are agencies, benefits, programs and services for senior citizens or individuals with disabilities.

I wish to thank you in advance for your prompt and thorough consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

Nancy S. Moloff

Nancy S. Moloff