



ESTABLISHED 1659

CITY OF NORWICH
CONNECTICUT

NORWICH HUMAN SERVICES

Adult & Family Services–Youth & Family Services–Rose City Senior Center
Phone (860) 823-3778 Fax(860) 823-3793

80 Broadway
Norwich, CT 06360

**Testimony for Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly
March 2nd, 2015 Hearing on Conservation and Development
By **Lee-Ann Gomes, Director, Norwich Human Services and
President, CT Coalition to End Homelessness****

Re: Department of Housing

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Norwich Hyman Services is a municipal agency that focuses on housing and homeless issues. We chair the Norwich Community Care Team (a group of health and social service agencies committed to ending homelessness) and facilitate coordinated access to housing for a portion of New London County. Additionally, we have converted our shelter to a rapid re-housing and shelter diversion program in line with HEARTH ACT goals to reduce shelter stays and truly end homelessness.

The Governor's proposed Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services budget is a wise set of investments to continue our state's progress to end homelessness. The CCT believes that housing is a basic human right. We strive to house homeless residents as it is humane for the person, provides for better quality of life for the individual and the community. Furthermore, it is less costly to house people rather than to shelter them or perpetuate their homelessness. By keeping people housed or re-housing the homeless, they can then address high level needs such as becoming employed, receiving treatment of a variety of issues, and pursuing self-sufficiency.

We support Gov. Malloy's proposed investments of 200 new units of scattered site supportive housing to serve those who frequently cycle through the criminal justice and homeless shelter systems. This will alleviate the expensive cycling through public systems (hospitals, corrections, and other public systems) of those who need housing and supports in CT.

The proposed investments of \$1 million each year for wrap-around services for people who are chronically homeless, as part of the Governor's Zero:2016 initiative, designed to end chronic homelessness by 2016 is much needed. We are also grateful for continued support of rapid re-housing (housing location and modest, time-limited financial assistance) for those who are homeless and have lower levels of assistance need.



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This intervention works – and helps to make new episodes of homelessness for individuals and families brief, rare and non-recurring.

It is extremely hard to tackle other issues a person may be facing without first addressing their housing. We applaud the Governor for continuing to make this a priority in his funding.

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Thank you,

L-A Gomes

Respectfully,
Lee-Ann Gomes