

March 6, 2015

Good evening, members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Pamela Mautte, and I'm the director of BHcare's Greater Valley Substance Abuse Action Council, and a member of the CT Prevention Network (CPN), today I'm here asking you to support restoration of funding for the Regional Action Council, which are very efficient and effective.

The proposed budget decimates funding for the Regional Action Council's, and the funding used by the RAC is core funding dollars that is crucial to the state and local communities. The RACs utilize the state funds to leverage and match additional federal and local funding. In the three years, we've collectively enhanced prevention services in the state by procuring **over \$11million in federal, private, and local funding for use at the sub-regional and municipal level and more than \$850,000 in in-kind donations per year.** These dollars would not be available to our communities if we did not have the state dollars to leverage or match them.

These dollars directly impact the communities you serve, because we have been able to invest in local prevention activities. I ask you to remember your return on investment is for every one state dollar you allocate to the Regional Action Councils, we bring in over \$10 in our funds, including federal and local.

However, it is important to remember we need the state dollars to match these federal dollars, and federal substance abuse grant dollars cannot be used to match additional federal dollars.

Our system is very effective, and it's beneficial to our communities as well as the State of Connecticut:

- Studies have shown that as economic decline prevails, substance abuse increases.
- Between 2009 –2013, there were **over 1,900 accidental and unintentional opioid involved deaths** that occurred in 150 of Connecticut's 169 cities and towns. (Source:AIDS-CT Nalaxone (Narcan) Fact Sheet Feb 2015)
- Among CT youth (Grades 9-12), **14%** have seriously **considered suicide**, **11%** have made a **suicide plan**, and **7%** have **attempted suicide** (CT Suicide Advisory Board)

Therefore, we need to continue to be in the front lines of our communities providing this valuable prevention programming. Insufficient funding will jeopardize the prevention infrastructure Connecticut has worked 25 years to build. In addition, the RAC infrastructure is held up as a model by other states and the federal government.

Again, I remind you about the return on investment and provide. We recognize that this budget proposal is impacting many services and agencies in Connecticut, but again remember the return on investment for the funding we do receive.

The Regional Action Councils have been funded at 1.4 million from the following accounts in FY 15: P.A. 13-184 (2014-2015 Budget Bill) up to \$1,100,000 made available for the Regional Action Councils and from DMHAS Budget (P.A. 14-47) provide funding for the Regional Action Councils of 300,000. The Governor's proposed budget eliminates everything but the small amount left in section 26 b of the proposed budget which states "up to 365,000 made available for the Regional Action Councils and the Governor's Prevention Partnership.

Again I remind you of your return on investment we provide. I urge you to remember that the Regional Action Councils are a good investment of state dollars. And for every dollar you spend, 10 is saved in societal cost and therefore is an investment that should not be overlooked.

Respectfully Submitted,



Pamela Mautte
Director