

**To: Members of the Appropriations Committee**

**From: Tony Corniello, Vice President of Clinical Services, BHcare**

**Re: Appropriations Committee Budget Hearings: DMHAS**

**Date: March 6, 2015**

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Representative Dillon, Representative Candelaria and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, I thank you for your consideration of my testimony. My name is Tony Corniello and I am the Vice President of Clinical Services for BHcare, a regional nonprofit dedicated to providing treatment and support for individuals struggling with mental illness and addiction. I am writing today in support of restoring funding for Regional Mental Health Boards (RMHBs)

RMHBs are Connecticut's system for involving all stakeholders in planning and monitoring mental health and addiction services; and are the community's voice in oversight, coordination, and evaluation of the behavioral health system. BHcare has a longstanding history of successful collaboration with our RMHB and I would hate to see that end, however the proposed biennial budget will force all RMHBs to close down on July 1, 2015.

"The Best Bargain in the System"

- The RMHBs produce results and touch thousands of lives on a low budget. With an average of 2 staff members each, and 500 dedicated volunteers across the state, they make a difference for individuals, families, and systems.
- The RMHBs represent an impressive return on investment. The \$584,000 in state funding to the RMHBs helps bring in \$23 million in federal funding for behavioral health services.

Please consider restoring funding for our Regional Mental Health Boards.

Sincerely,

Tony Corniello