

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**In opposition to the Governor's Proposed Biennial Budget**  
**March 6, 2015**  
**Alan E. Coker**

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Alan Coker... I am the face of Mental Health

I am a resident from East Hartford, I was born in New Britain Connecticut. I'm 57 years old. I've been disabled since 2004.

5 years ago I walked into a place in East Hartford called InterCommunity. A staff, second to none, literally took a genuine interest in me and my state of being. I could list all my diagnosis and health issues but I'm only allowed three minutes.

Besides the great care InterCommunity gave me, they blended programs from DMHAS such as the Wise program, assistance with employment, and housing. I met with dedicated people from InterCommunity and DMHAS. What are the results? In 2012 I was able to return to work. I did so well that after I had to stop for hip replacement surgery, my employer wanted me back. Guess what happened when the other hip was done? They wanted me back again! In 2014, I started school, began learning to be an advocate for patient rights, and disabled. Today, I'm in school in New Haven, training to be a peer support specialist, so I can assist people in recovery with mental health and addiction concerns.

I'm not going to advertise here, but I just open my own business as a Mental Health Consultant. Yes I am the face of Mental Health; any Budget cuts to DMHAS will be a domino effect in mental health services. Please let Connecticut continue to take a lead in advancing Mental Health Treatment. I pray that none of you will revisit this day in thought and reflect, "I failed to make the right decision."  
Thank you for the privilege and time you allowed me to address my concerns.

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