

# Yale University

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**TESTIMONY OF DR. MICHAEL V. PANTALON  
FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MARCH 11, 2015  
IN SUPPORT OF RAISED H.B. 6976  
AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF  
RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Good morning Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. I am submitting this testimony in full support of H.B. 6976, an act concerning a study of recovery high school programs, because students recovering from substance use disorders are in dire need of an academic and social environment that supports recovery. Traditional high schools, while rigorous from academic, athletic and extracurricular perspectives, often pose an extremely dangerous social challenge to students in recovery, which can be a trigger of relapse. Even when students in recovery are able to handle such challenges, the effort required to do so detracts from the effort that they could be putting toward strengthening their recovery. In contrast, a recovery high school would provide students with recovery supports that would not only help promote ongoing treatment and prevent relapse, but also allow students to take greater advantage of academic opportunities. However, it is my professional opinion as an addiction researcher and clinician, as well as, a clinical and school psychologist, that these recovery high school advantages could only be realized if students' recovery activities were informed by evidence-based (i.e., scientifically-validated) treatment approaches (i.e., versus support groups only) and involved on-site professional recovery coaches who are specifically trained to help students find and make effective use of such evidence-based treatment.

Thus, in order to promote greater lengths of sustained recovery among Connecticut's youth with substance use disorders, I would strongly urge the Education Committee to support H.B. 6976, an act concerning a study of recovery high school programs. If the committee has any questions about any of these opinions or would like to speak with me further, please do not hesitate to contact me at the telephone number or email address provided herein. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

*Michael V. Pantalon, Ph.D.*

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