



TESTIMONY ON
HB 5058: AN ACT CONCERNING SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT.

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee:

As a licensed clinical psychologist working with an agency that provides substance abuse treatment, and in a private practice in Hartford, I am writing to offer strong support for HB 5058. The CDC reports that excessive alcohol use is responsible for about 88,000 deaths and 2.5 million years of potential life lost in the United States each year. In Connecticut, 17.9% of adults and 22.3% of high school students reported binge drinking in 2011. Excessive alcohol use cost the United States \$223.5 billion, or \$1.90 per drink consumed, in 2006 as a result of lost workplace productivity, healthcare expenses, and crime. In Connecticut, excessive alcohol use cost \$2.7 billion, or \$1.91 per drink. The national Survey on Drug Use and Health reported that in 2007-2008 Connecticut was one of the top ten states for dependence on illicit drugs among adults ages 18-25. The negative effects of alcohol and drug use disorders affect the health and well being of individuals, families and children.

Research indicates that treatment for alcohol and drug use disorders is effective when it is accessible and individualized to meet the needs of the individual. Individuals vary in their readiness for treatment, making it essential that treatment is available when there is willingness to participate without waiting for certain conditions to be met. One aspect of treatment is using empirically supported methods to help the individual begin making the changes necessary to recover when they first begin contemplating the need for change. The negative impact of intoxication or drug use on health, safety, income and relationships may be avoided if individuals can receive services when they are first motivated to talk to a treatment provider, regardless of whether they are under the influence. Additionally this may reduce the costs of crime if services are available and individuals can begin their recovery when they first consider a need for change.

An essential aspect of treatment is assessing the individual to determine need for detoxification services and to develop an individualized treatment approach. An advantage to accessing treatment without being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is that assessment will be more timely and accurate, possibly leading to quicker outcomes and reducing costs of treatment. One deterrent to seeking treatment is the stigma of alcohol and drug use. Research indicates that people, particularly women, may avoid displaying being under the influence of alcohol or drugs,



and wish to avoid seeking treatment in these conditions. Without requiring that individuals be under the influence there may be more willingness to access treatment and openly discuss their use, leading to the individual taking steps towards recovery.

For these reasons I strongly urge you to support HB 5058.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kathleen Chapman, Ph.D.