

**February 18, 2016**  
**Human Services Committee Public Hearing Testimony**  
**Name: Bonnie Meyers**

Good Day Chairpersons and Members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Bonnie Meyers, and I am the Director of Programs & Services at the Brain Injury Alliance of CT. I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to THE GOVERNOR'S proposal to repeal the section of the state statute requiring legislative review and approval of Medicaid Waivers. This statute assures that, in addition to legislative review, there is to be a public hearing.

I firmly believe that the current process of mandated legislative review and approval for all Medicaid Waiver Programs, and any proposed amendments thereafter, is an important and necessary component of ensuring that all involved have a voice in the process of change. The waiver program is grounded on a fundamental model of person-centered planning and choice. While this is certainly not to say that public voice should direct waiver regulations and policy and all aspects of the waiver program, the fact remains that, as much as possible within given resources and state/federal guidelines, public opinion is important and need to be heard and considered in the process of waiver development and change.

The needs of those with brain injury are complex, multi-faceted, and unique. The individuals who receive these services and those who advocate for their needs are best equipped to offer input into what works best for those served.

With the utmost due respect, state legislators cannot be expected to hold expertise in disability-related issues, including that of brain injury. Nor can they be expected to understand the full intricacies of the waiver program or constantly remain abreast of waiver details. They need to rely on both those opinions of the waiver management team as well as public voice. I have absolutely no doubt that waiver management team are advocates for the brain injury community. I also have no doubt that the waiver management team is constantly faced with an excruciatingly difficult task of balancing the needs of the individual with those of the Department. I understand that the intention of this proposal is an attempt to maximize efficiency and timeliness when a change is necessary, to ensure that things do not get "stuck" throughout the process, and to ensure state compliance with CMS guidelines. While I support every effort to ensure compliance, I do not believe that the answer is to remove legislative review and approval, thus eliminating the public voice. The answer is to find ways to be more proactive in identifying when a change or amendment might be necessary, being timely in requesting legislative review with public hearing, and then to allow all relevant voices to be heard. This is the answer.

Respectfully,

Bonnie Meyers, CRC CBIST  
Brain Injury Alliance of CT