

Testimony of Brian C. Naylor to Appropriations Committee 11 Feb 16

My name MSgt Brian Naylor, USAF retired, and I am employed by Independence Northwest Inc, one of five Centers for Independent Living (CIL) in CT. As a 30-year retired veteran my job as Veterans/Independent Living Advocate is to assist aging veterans with VA benefits, Medicare CHOICES, Medicare Saving Program, obtaining and presenting the CT Wartime Service Medals, and a host of other personal needs that may be requested. As I had testified last year, I am currently the only Veterans Advocate in the CIL state network and have seen an increasing need for personal basic veterans needs. In FY 2015, I assisted more than 40 veterans as well as presenting Medicare Savings Program presentations to seniors covering 92 cities and towns in Northern CT.

Since October 2015 I have already assisted 15 veterans of all ages. I am now receiving requests from VA Social workers from both state VA hospitals because they know I do not just help with paperwork and phone calls. I visit homes; meet with family members, and personally assist with all of these veterans needs.

The CIL's in this state fulfill a very unique, but more importantly, a needed service. We are an extremely diverse group of individuals using our disabilities and experiences to be sure that other people in similar circumstances have a voice and an advocate that can relate to their needs. The CIL's also play a key role in the Money Follows The Person (MFP) program. In 2015 they transitioned 233 individuals out of nursing homes and back into the community, saving the state millions of care dollars.

In closing, during my 2 plus years in this position I have been enlightened to the dire needs of others, grown in my own sensitivity and have been able to assist over 75 Veterans on a personal basis and have actually worked with and presented vital information to over 1200 seniors. Please do not cut this unique, diverse group of agencies, the Centers for Independent Living out this year's budget.

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