

**February 11, 2016**

**Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Testimony**

**Julie Peters, Executive Director, Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut**

Good Evening Chairpersons and Members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Julie Peters, Executive Director at the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut I am submitting this testimony in opposition to THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS. In his proposal, the Governor seeks to reduce or eliminate funding for important core services of the Department, including funding for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut.

For over 30 years, BIAC has received an operating grant from the Department of Social Services to provide entirely free resources and supports which the State is unable to provide.

The Department of Social Services contracts with BIAC to provide services required as part of the Medicaid ABI Waiver program. The contract with BIAC is used as evidence in five sections of the Waiver application showing that DSS is meeting the obligations of this federal program. In the amendments to both Waivers which has recently been proposed by DSS, BIAC is the **only organization approved to provide advanced training for case managers.**

If BIAC's contract with DSS would end, DSS would no longer have the mechanism to provide these essential services required as part of the ABI Medicaid Waiver and needed for compliance with CMS. In fact, the services we offer are so comprehensive that the DSS public awareness campaign on brain injury does not list any DSS phone number on their billboards and signs. ***It lists the BIAC Helpline number (see attached photograph.)***

In his budget summary, the Governor incorrectly asserts that for years the state budget "*automatically funds every activity or line item previously funded, with increases for*

*inflation...*This is simply not true. Despite a staggering increase in calls to BIAC's helpline and requests for assistance from DSS over the past 15 years, BIAC has not received any increase in our contract in over 10 years and actually we currently receive 13% less than we received in 2008. BIAC's services only cost the state \$114,460 last year.

Despite every effort to control costs and to seek additional sources of funding, it will be increasingly become more difficult for BIAC to meet the obligations of our contract, including the mandated requirement for new training, without additional funding.

The bottom line is this: With BIAC the State's *de facto* resource for brain injury services, eliminating BIAC's operating grant will devastate the delivery of services and supports, including those required under the ABI Medicaid Waiver, to thousands of Connecticut residents and the ever-increasing number of returning veterans whose lives have been shattered by the experience of brain injury. We are seeking the reinstatement of our contract related funding that has been removed through attrition as well as additional funding so we can meet our mandated obligations under the requirements of our state contract. Please create a line item for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut for at least \$150,000.

**Julie Peters**  
**Simsbury, CT**

*Department of Social Services Banner*

