

February 11, 2016

## Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Testimony

Good Evening Chairpersons and Members of the Appropriations Committee. 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.

As a Brain Injury Survivor myself, I can personally attest to the tremendous personal support that this organization provides. I've seen and experienced this first hand, including attending Brain Injury Support group meetings that they coordinate and witnessing support that they provide to survivors and their families for the many overwhelming challenges they face.

- Connecticut meets the federal Medicaid ABI Waiver program, through services provided by BIAC, under contract to the DSS. 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.** BIAC's responsibilities *according to the ABI Waiver Application submitted to the Centers for Medicaid Services (CMS)* include:
  - Supporting the participant in Service Plan Development and providing information regarding participant direction
  - Disseminating information to the community related to brain injury.
  - Facilitating free monthly support groups throughout Connecticut.
  - Statewide toll free support number, providing consultation and resource facilitation for persons who have sustained a brain injury, their families, caregivers and providers
  - Training and community education programs
  - Through BIAC, information about the identification and reporting of abuse, neglect is disseminated to clients, families, and their representatives.

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

*inflation...* This is simply not true. BIAC has not received any increase in their contract in over 10 years and actually currently received 13% less than they received in 2008.

- **No one else does what BIAC does, including the Department of Social Services (DSS)**, which is why DSS contracts with BIAC to provide the many essential services that it is not equipped to offer. BIAC meets the needs of the State's brain injury survivors on behalf of DSS as efficiently as it does effectively.
  - BIAC provides all services at a fraction of what it would cost DSS to provide these services.
  - BIAC's work on behalf of DSS reduces the brain injury-related workload at DSS.
  - BIAC provides critical training and consultation to most of the State key agencies- including DSS, VA, DCF, DPH, DOE, DOC, DMHAS, DDS, and BRS.
  
- 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.** BIAC's services only cost the state \$114,460 last year. Despite a staggering increase in calls to BIAC's helpline and requests for assistance from DSS over the past 15 years, BIAC has only seen its contract reduced.

**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. We are seeking the reinstatement of our contract related funding that has been removed through attrition as well as a small amount of 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 to at least \$150,000.**

Thank you

Michael Jennings, 12E Wiggins Farm Drive Simsbury, CT