



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

DANNEL P. MALLOY
GOVERNOR

MIRIAM DELPHIN-RITTMON, PH.D.
COMMISSIONER

Testimony of Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., Commissioner
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
Before the Appropriations Committee
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Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and I am here to discuss the Governor's proposed midterm budget for FY 2017.

DMHAS is a health care service agency charged with two key responsibilities. First, we focus on the prevention, treatment, and promotion of recovery and return to full citizenship of over 109,000 persons at risk for or experiencing a serious mental health or substance use condition each year. Second, through the provision of effective screening, treatment intervention, and rehabilitation, DMHAS is an essential partner in ensuring the safety of our communities through the identification and management of risk related to mental illness and addiction. The DMHAS system of care is a public/private partnership, which provides mental health, substance use inpatient and ambulatory services through our state-operated facilities and through contracts with over 165 private non-profit, community-based agencies statewide. This system includes 13 Local Mental Health Authorities and one state hospital.

As you are well aware, Connecticut's slow economic growth continues to present our state with budgetary challenges. While the proposed budget will present us with difficult service system decisions the Department remains committed to its core mission of promoting wellness, preventing illness and strengthening a recovery-oriented system of care for people with serious psychiatric and substance use conditions. It is important to recognize the significant investments in behavioral health services which have occurred over the past several years. Funding to DMHAS has increased under Governor Malloy -the FY 2017 proposed budget includes \$688.3 million, net of fringe expenses, compared to actual expenditures of \$606 million in FY 2011, after adjusting for the transfer of Low Income Adult funding to the Department of Social Services (DSS) in order to reflect an accurate comparison. Additionally, the number of behavioral health clients served by DMHAS has also risen -- from 105,534 in 2011 to 109,444 in 2015. It is also noteworthy that the proposed

budget does not apply a 5.75% reduction to the General Assistance Managed Care account or the Disproportionate Share (DSH) funding which is appropriated in the DMHAS-Disproportionate Share account in DSS. Although challenging, the Governor's proposed budget focuses on maintaining the core services that are in place.

DMHAS core services promote the overall health and wellness of persons with behavioral health needs through an integrated network of holistic, comprehensive, effective, and efficient mental health and substance use services and recovery supports that foster dignity, respect, and self-sufficiency. These services and supports are culturally responsive, attentive to trauma, build on personal, family and community strengths, and focus on promoting each person's recovery and full citizenship. Integral to all services and supports is an emphasis on prevention, identifying and managing risk, and promoting community safety. Some examples of services that promote our mission include mental health and substance abuse inpatient and outpatient treatment programs, medication management, forensic services, housing supports and crisis services. Additional examples of core services provided to special populations include, Young Adult Services, Traumatic Brain Injury services, discharge programs for clients to return to the community, residential and transitional services for forensic clients as part of the Governor's Second Chance Society initiative, wrap-around services for chronically homeless individuals and responsive substance abuse services to address the current rise in opiate use in our communities.

In order to align with the new economic reality, DMHAS will employ various strategies to evaluate our service system including: leveraging data to inform decision making, evaluating state operated and contracted services to maximize available resources and encouraging mergers and partnerships to achieve economies of scale. The proposal to consolidate agency funds will support the strategies outlined above and will provide the flexibility and accountability needed to achieve our mission to support the clients we serve.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Committee today. I will be happy to take any questions you may have at this time.