

# CT COMMUNITY NONPROFIT ALLIANCE

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To: Members of the Appropriations Committee

From: Ben Shaiken, Public Policy Specialist, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance

Re: Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on H.B. 5044 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017.

Date: February 18, 2016

Good evening distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Ben Shaiken, Public Policy Specialist of CT Community Nonprofit Alliance. CT Community Nonprofit Alliance represents more than 550 community nonprofit organizations and associations across the state and is the largest advocacy organization representing community nonprofits in Connecticut. Our members serve more than 500,000 Connecticut residents each year.

Earlier this evening, you heard from Jeffrey Walter, CEO of CT Community Nonprofit Alliance about the \$408 million that the Governor is proposing cutting from state agencies that support the community nonprofits that provide the state's core services. 72% of the total cuts proposed in this budget will fall on state agencies that support community nonprofits.

I am here today to comment specifically on the proposed shift of the Community Residential Services line from DDS to DSS. This change reflects a transfer of more than \$537 million from DDS to DSS, or nearly half of the total DDS Operating Budget in FY17.

The proposed shift has the potential to create positive change in the provision of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. However, **without adequate rates, no rate setting methodology can fix the problems in the DDS Community Residential Services programs. Without adequate rates, the waiting list cannot be reduced.**

The Governor's budget represents a 1:1 transfer between DDS and DSS. Under the current system, there is not adequate funding to address either drastic underpayment to all providers or the waiting list. Without more information, **we are not certain that a simple transfer without new funding will solve either of these problems.**

In the Governor's budget presentation, the Behavioral Health Partnership is cited as an example of a successful transition in Connecticut. One of the most important reasons for its success is the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council (CGS § 319 Sec. 17a-22j). The BHPOC provides critical oversight of DSS and DMHAS, including an important role in the review of rates and rate methodologies. **If an I/DD Partnership is created, an I/DD Partnership Oversight Council must be established as well – with similar statutory provisions as the BHPOC.** Without it, we cannot support the proposed transfer of Community Residential Services to DSS.

Governor's Bill 17 in the Human Services Committee contains language implementing the proposed I/DD Partnership. Earlier, we testified in a public hearing **that language must be strengthened to provide a statutory mandate with teeth under which the proposed I/DD Partnership will operate.**

Finally, **community nonprofits and families must be at the table throughout all aspects the transition**, including writing a state plan amendment, rate setting methodology and the setting of a rate at DSS. We know what works and what doesn't work on the ground, and **our perspective will be the difference between success and failure.**

**Please continue to work with all stakeholders, including community nonprofits, to make sure any change to the system will be successful in serving the citizens of Connecticut.**

Connecticut's community nonprofits deliver the state's core services. The individuals served by community nonprofits are some of the state's most needy citizens, and in many instances, those who strive every day to increase or regain their independence. The services they receive are life sustaining. They are our children and parents, our neighbors and friends. Without community services, they will have no place to go to meet their needs, or they may be forced to more costly alternatives, such as emergency departments, hospitals—even jails.

In the past, the legislature has proven that it takes the needs and well-being of Connecticut residents seriously. Please continue to support the hundreds of thousands of individuals, children and families served by community nonprofits across Connecticut.

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