



Central Naugatuck Valley
HELP, Inc.

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Testimony Submitted to the Appropriations Committee:

H.B. No. 5044: An Act Making Adjustments To State Expenditures For The Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017.

Submitted By: Roberta Murtagh, Executive Director, C.N.V. Help, Inc.

February 18, 2016

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Roberta Murtagh, and I am the Executive Director of C.N.V. Help, Inc. with behavioral health programs located in Waterbury, Torrington and Danbury. We are among the 550+ member agencies of the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (CT Nonprofit Alliance.)

I would like to share my concerns with House Bill 5044: An Act Making Adjustments To State Expenditures For The Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017. In particular, I wanted to express my sincere concerns to the funding reductions to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. This funding reduction would threaten critical services to individuals and families in our service area.

It is a critical time for substance abuse services and providers who are trying desperately to deal with the opiate crisis that is ravaging citizens of this state and nationwide. Deaths from opiate overdoses have increased 300% in a three year period, and it is evident and vital that we do more to assist individuals with substance use issues, not less.

Our agency also provides mental health residential and outpatient services. Cuts to mental health services would be devastating for the vulnerable individuals and families that we serve. It is frightening to imagine what that would mean at our programs, particularly our residential programs, where we already underfunded and struggle to meet clients' needs. Managed Service System and Grants for Mental Health Services funds must be preserved to ensure that critical services are not reduced or eliminated.

In addition, I am concerned about the Governor's proposed reduction in funding to Behavioral Health Boards and Councils. The vital work that is achieved by these organizations is an integral component of our service system. I hope that you will not approve this consolidation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, or for additional information.

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