

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee

February 18, 2016

Bonnie Eldridge from Willimantic, Connecticut

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Bonnie Eldridge and I am a registered voter in the town of Willimantic. I am a cancer survivor.

I am here to testify on **H.B. No. 5044 An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2017.**

I am opposed to any proposed cuts to the DMHAS and any mental health services and supports. I urge you to keep critical services available to the residents of Connecticut.

Currently, I see an APRN at United Services for my medication. I go to the Lighthouse Clubhouse almost daily for a variety of activities that include health and wellness topics to exercise. With these two supports in place, I have been able to graduate, so I no longer need case management services. I am an active member of Keep the Promise and am also, an active member of the Eastern Regional Mental Health Board. Last year I was awarded the first annual Robert E. Davidson Award for Advocacy. I have found my voice and I feel pretty comfortable speaking in public.

Without these services, I feel I would go backwards mentally. I know I would be depressed and would find it difficult to live in the community. My confidence comes from having these supports. Please don't take my safety net out from under me.

Thank you for listening about how important mental health services are to me and to others like me that suffer from mental illness.