

**Testimony of Giovanna Pisani,  
Director of Mid-Fairfield Substance Abuse Coalition, Program of Human Services Council  
Connecticut Prevention Network**

**H.B. No. 5044 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR  
THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017.**

*Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services- Regional Action Council Funding  
February 18, 2016 Appropriations Subcommittee on Health Public Hearing*

Madam Chair, Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana and Representative Dillon, my name is Giovanna Pisani and I am the Director of Mid-Fairfield Substance Abuse Coalition at the Human Services Council in Norwalk, CT. I am writing today to strongly oppose the grave cuts to regional action councils that will decimate the current prevention network structure.

I am concerned about the proposed budget cuts because; Norwalk, Westport, Wilton, and Weston will have no substance abuse coordination or prevention services.

Connecticut continues to say that we are in an Opioid/Heroin epidemic. Then, we cannot afford **NOT** to have prevention dollars. There is federal funding available but is already so competitive, and the chances for coalitions to receive federal funding will be impossible.

In 2015, Community Prevention Network (CPN) established 55 medication drop boxes in CT with more on the way. CT has collected 23,541 pounds of substances from these collection boxes. CPN has held more than 20 community forums on opioid abuse, opioid misuse and trained more than 500 people to use Naloxene (Narcan) -- an overdose reversal syringe).

My coalition and other regional action councils have collaborated with the towns we serve and held School Resource Officers training on Drug Recognition Awareness. The training covered drug trends for adolescents, methods of drug use, paraphernalia used with specific drugs, signs of impairment and impairment tests.

The Connection Prevention Network is the only organized prevention network in the state. We coordinate and disseminate information to all 13 Regional Action Councils. In the past we have been a leader in pushing legislation on emerging prevention issues. Those efforts include classifying synthetic marijuana and salvia as illegal drugs, developing laws and regulations governing e-cigarettes, strengthening the laws surrounding prescription drug monitoring and reporting, expanding the availability of Narcan and banning the sale of powdered alcohol. We actively engage in policy advocacy at the local, state and federal levels.

We urge you to reject the severe budget cuts to regional action councils and keep in place the current CT Prevention Network structure.