

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee

H.B. No. 5044

AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017.

February 18, 2016

John Sembrakis, West Hartford CT

Dear Legislators and to whom it may concern:

My name is John Sembrakis and I am a registered voter in West Hartford. My testimonial is in regards to how much it costs to hospitalize a mental health consumer when he or she has not been taking their medications. I was diagnosed in 1985 and I kept on going off medication once a year for six years. The average cost to treat a consumer that has gone off medication is \$50,000.00 a year. Thus in my case it was \$300,000.00 in six years. In 1991 a social worker came to me and said that it was one thing to go off medication to be free of responsibility, but that I should think about the financial and emotional cost to providers and others. I have not been hospitalized since 1991. During that time, I have achieved many things (But it is not so important to discuss that). You as providers, by law, cannot force consumers to take their medication, however, consumers should be convinced (legally) to stay on medications. It is my hope that both consumers and providers address this issue with a zealous and passionate approach.

The Regional Mental Health Boards help people in recovery find ways to stay healthy by allowing opportunities for involvement and for improving the mental health system. I have been part of the North Central Regional Mental Health Board for a long time and I am now the Chair of CAC 18, which includes West Hartford. Without the Regional Boards, I don't know where I would be today. Please save core services like the Regional Mental Health Board.

Thank you.

John.