

Testimony of Corina E. O’Dea, RDH

**Vice Chairman of S.M.A.R.T., Inc. (Southbury & Middlebury Acting Responsibly Together) and of the
Local Prevention Council of Southbury and Middlebury, Connecticut**

**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*

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, Senator Gerratana, Representative Dillon and members of the Appropriations Subcommittee:

My name is Corina O’Dea and I am the vice chairperson for a non-profit agency that has the responsibility of being our local prevention council for Region 15, Southbury and Middlebury. I strongly oppose the grave cuts to regional action councils that will decimate the current prevention network structure. The current proposed budget would equate to an almost 80% funding cut which means that CNVRAC and many of the other Regional Action Councils would cease to exist.

These cuts would be devastating to the invaluable work that the Regional Action Councils and Local Prevention Councils do across our state and a terrible disservice to the citizens of the state of Connecticut. Connecticut state news headlines constantly warn of the increased abuse of opioids and statics in our state show a marked increase in heroin overdose with hundreds of deaths in 2014, S.M.A.R.T., Inc. (Southbury & Middlebury Acting Responsibly Together) as well as the many other councils working under the guidance of their Regional Action Councils, work painstakingly in their communities to squeeze the most out of every grant dollar to provide every community in the state with education, training, and advocacy for substance abuse prevention and related community concerns such as behavioral health, violence, gambling, drunk driving, prescription drugs, opioids and suicide! In Southbury/Middlebury alone, our regional action council, the CNVRAC has been an integral force in the development of the following initiatives:

- Parent University Series, Free Informative workshops for parents of children K-College on prevention, awareness, intervention and treatment. Topics include:
 - Chris Herren Speaking Engagement.
 - Self-Destructive Behaviors Teenagers Engage In: What to look for and how to help your teen.
 - Adolescent Substance Use, Abuse and Addiction.
 - Challenge 28-drug/alcohol free contract for our high school students.
 - Community Conversation - Wanting the Best for Our Youth.
 - Masked vs. Unmasked, Helping Your Children Empower themselves to have Healthy Relationships.
 - Parenting for Your Child’s Success.
 - Uncovering Your Child’s Natural Gifts: A Strengths-Based Approach to ADHD.
 - Self-Destructive Behaviors Teenagers Engage In: What to look for and how to help your teen.
 - Why Do My Child & I Battle Over Homework (And who will win the war?).
 - Happy Parents = Happy Children.
 - Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.
 - Parents: You Matter. Drugs/Alcohol, Your Teen and You.
 - Adolescent Substance Use, Abuse and Addiction.
 - Community Conversation - Wanting the Best for Our Youth.
 - Race to Nowhere: A Documentary Film on our current Educational System.
 - “Girls Night Out”: A film and discussion on how to Raise Confident and Successful Women.
 - Challenge 28 drug/alcohol-free contract for our high school students.

- Community of Concern books - A Guide to the Prevention of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs distributed to all families of middle and high school students in Region 15.
- BE SMART, DON'T START campaign to engage students in making healthy choices.
- Funded local pharmacy the \$50 to carry Narcan.
- TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures) follow-up to Alcohol Compliance Checks.
- Medication Management - What Everyone Should Know (provided in recent years at our local senior center).
- Narcan video discussions and education.
- Promotion & coordination of a comprehensive youth risk behavior and resiliency survey conducted with all students in grades 7-12 throughout Regional School District No. 15.
- Promotion & coordination of a district-wide youth-led analysis of local-level risk and protective factors affecting adolescent substance use, education, risk of suicide, bullying, safety, and other areas affecting health and wellness among young people.
- Sub-regional and local training delivery: 40 Developmental Assets for Youth; Opioid Abuse Prevention Forum; Financial Wellness for Seniors and Problem Gambling Prevention Across the Lifespan; Local Prevention Council "101"; Local Prevention Council Capacity Building; Local Prevention Council TA: Prevention Strategies & Effective Service Delivery.
- Development and dissemination of Opioid Overdose Wallet Card to prevent opioid overdose and deaths
- Mental Health First Aid course for community members to be knowledgeable on signs and symptoms of mental health and addiction disorders.
- A resource support for our school systems, town offices, parents and community members at large.
- Website and social media as education tool
- Public awareness program educating communities and parents about the health and safety risks of serving alcohol at teen parties.
- Anti-smoking campaign across the age spectrum.

In closing, I urge you to OPPOSE the severe budget cuts that threaten the survival of Connecticut's regional action councils and countless other important prevention services and local-level supports that will be lost. It is my hope that I have impressed upon you the gravity of this potential budget cut, so that we may preserve our prevention infrastructure, saving long-term costs and at the end of the day, saving lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Corina O'Dea, S.M.A.R.T., Inc. Vice Chairperson

Southbury/Middlebury