

**Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
on Governor's proposed Midterm Budget adjustments FY 2017**

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

**Re: Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) budget
February 18, 2016**

Emily La Croix, Granby

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Emily La Croix and I am a registered voter in Granby.

I am writing to you today to share with you the benefits and importance of supportive housing for individuals with high-need mental health conditions and other health concerns. I understand that you will need to make difficult choices due to our difficult state budget situation. However, I would like to highlight the proven and cost effective solution of Supportive Housing, which combines safe, decent housing with rental assistance and supportive services chosen by the individual. This support of individuals with serious mental illness reduces hospitalizations, court involvement and promotes independence and hopefully a return to work. Unfortunately, we aging parents worry about our loved one's futures.

One of my good friends, now deceased, spoke honestly about her fear for her daughter. What would happen should she no longer be able to support and watch over her middle-aged daughter? At that time, her daughter had experienced multiple hospitalizations, a car accident, and a divorce. Now, her daughter lives in supportive housing close enough to services that she can walk or pedal her 3-wheeled bike to go to the library, shop, or get her medications. I am certain the state is saving money, in the short and long run, by providing housing in a subsidized mixed housing, rather than her court appearances for driving violations and, hopefully, avoiding inpatient hospitalizations at the Institute of Living.

When my daughter, a college graduate, developed serious mental illness she made many efforts to achieve independence. She had both social problems and work-related problems. She acquired Social Security disability and Medicare coverage. Suitable housing did not relieve her disorganized habits and resulted in more than 3 inpatient hospitalizations in CT. Her inability to maintain a healthy lifestyle and inability to live within a budget continued to be a problem. Because we are also retired seniors, we have the same long-term concerns for our loved one. A trustee provided by a bank and a small trust fund will not alone, ensure a good future without us. However, supportive housing would be a long-term solution.

Another friend's son, a graduate of an Ivy League college, is also having similar problems. He has had jail diversion and a few hospitalizations for acute alcoholism plus underlying bipolar illness. He is currently in a temporary housing facility, having had to leave his apartment due to long-term problems living alone. These responsible parents have the same concerns as our family. In their case, they have a trust fund and a relative willing to be a trustee. However, a long-distance relationship with the trustee is not a good solution.

In closing, we think supportive housing will be the best short and long-term solution for individuals and their families and be a prudent solution for the state and taxpayers as well. Most families our age (70+) have children who still desire independent living. Continuing care retirement communities are reluctant to admit middle-aged people, nor is that a good solution for those of us who hope for recovery and an independence lifestyle for our loved ones. We strongly recommend expanded permanent supportive housing for high need populations.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily La Croix