



**Appropriations Committee Hearing
Connecticut General Assembly Regarding the Governor's 2016 Budget
Proposal
February 17, 2016**

Good afternoon, Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Georgette J. Katin, Executive Director of the Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern Connecticut, Inc. (SACCEC) located in Willimantic, CT; our agency is one of the nine member centers of the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence. I wish to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the Governor's Budget Proposal. We strongly oppose the proposal, which potentially cuts our funding by 5.75%, and, we oppose the consolidation of funding for sexual assault services into a general fund, which removes decisions regarding the level of funding for victims from legislative oversight.

SACCEC serves Windham and New London Counties and the towns of Columbia, Coventry, Mansfield, Willington and Union with two offices: our main office in Willimantic and our sub office in New London. We provide free and confidential services to victims of sexual assault, child sexual abuse, dating violence and adult survivors of child sexual abuse. Our services are comprehensive, in that we provide continuing services to victims from the point at which they first report until the time the case is resolved. Routinely the client will continue to be seen by the same staff person throughout that time. If the victim is a child, we will also provide counseling services to parents, siblings, grandparents or other significant friends or family members who routinely care for the children, and provide them with the tools necessary to help them and their child recover. In addition, staff are available 24 hours a day to answer questions and provide support and information. The crisis line serves as a point of contact for clients who are in need of immediate assistance.

Our staff respond in person to hospital calls to provide crisis intervention and medical advocacy and support. Staff also provides advocacy and support during criminal investigations if the victim chooses to make a report to the police. Staff assist clients in obtaining Restraining Orders against their perpetrators, and accompany clients to court. Staff also act as liaisons for the client in coordinating with and obtaining information from medical personnel, the police, DCF, and court personnel. We also assist college students with campus administrative justice processes. We work collaboratively with the Multidisciplinary Teams (child sexual abuse investigations) and our staff provide the Family Advocacy/Crisis Intervention services at the Child Advocacy Centers in Windham and New London Counties. SACCEC provides schools and colleges in our catchment area with prevention and education programs.

In the provision of these comprehensive services we are unique; this intensive model of counseling and support has, according to research, provided the best outcomes for victims of sexual violence. The goal of this model is to ensure that those who have been traumatized by an incident of violence will not only be supported, but regain their pre-trauma level of functioning and continue to thrive. We believe we have been highly successful in this endeavor.

Over the past decade our agency has seen a steady rise in the number of individuals who seek our services. This current year we have seen an increase of 19% in the number of clients we have served in comparison to the previous fiscal year. Our agency was operating at capacity last year and given the significant increase in clients this year, any cut in funding will result in our inability to respond to every request for service and impair our ability to respond to emergency calls.