

April 11, 2016

Appropriations & Human Services Committees Public Hearing

ABI and ABI II Waiver Amendment

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Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut

Good morning Chairpersons and Committee members. My name is Melinda Montovani, and I am a Brain Injury Specialist, at the Brain Injury Alliance of CT (BIAC). I reside in the town of West Hartford. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in regard to the DSS proposal to amend the ABI Waivers for the purpose of changing the case management service currently provided by department social workers to independent, contracted entities.

I ask for you to support this change. I have answered calls at the Helpline for 10 years and the ability of the DSS social workers to respond to individuals, family members, and other professionals has significantly declined over time as their work load increased. We have individuals with brain injuries who contact us trying to reach their DSS worker. They would have left several messages over a series of weeks with no response. When I would try to address the communication issue I could not reach the DSS worker either. The case loads are simply too high for people to respond effectively.

There are individuals on the ABI Waiver who have service plans that have not been updated in years. These are plans which regulations stipulate that they be updated annually. With no new goals to work for, how can an individual make improvements and move forward on their journey. Caseloads continue to increase but the number of social workers decrease. With a hiring freeze and layoffs on the horizon the ability of the workers to respond to clients will be diminished further. Quality cannot be maintained in the current situation which then impacts ABI Waiver participants in a negative manner.

We have to find an alternate solution. Please support the amendment to transition case management services to independent contracted entities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Montovani