

## Human Services Public Hearing RE: Governor's bill S 17

Representative Abercrombie, Senator Moore and Members of the Committee

My name is Elaine Burns and I am the mother of a brain injury survivor as well as the president of CT Brain Injury Support Network

I strongly oppose the Governor's proposal to eliminate legislative overview of Medicaid Waivers. Ben Barnes stated today, in the CT Mirror, that Legislator's denial to outsource the Waiver has "prevented the state from being able to extend services to people currently on the wait list." And that "we're getting frustrated with this process."

He failed to note that up until the time of the denial and the administration DSS was fully capable of extending services to those on the wait list and was immediately filling wait list slots as funds became available.

This is confirmed in a December 14<sup>th</sup> email from Kathy Bruni, ABI Waiver Program Manager, to the mother of a survivor on the wait list -

***"We are methodically assigning slots on a regular basis and can assure you that \*\*\*\*\*'s slot will come up soon.***

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, just three days after that encouraging email, legislators denied DSS's request to outsource the ABI Waiver.

After the denial by legislators, DSS's and Governor Malloy' "frustration" appears to have caused them to make a very poor decision:

- DSS suddenly realized they had a very specific and significant staff shortage that ONLY impacted those 13 wait list **slots, and stopped processing the wait list slots**, even when funds became available.

On January 6<sup>th</sup> in direct contradiction to her letter only 3 weeks earlier, Kathy Bruni sent a letter to Centers of Medicare and Medicaid stating:

***"We are not presently able to provide sufficient staff support to activate new clients on the 13 new waiver slots that would otherwise be made available, on the availability of funds over the course of 2016. This will mean that the involved individuals will remain on the waiting list."***

***And that this was caused by: "the committees denied DSS's request"*** (regarding outsourcing the Waiver).

This is now not a budget issue, as some slots have recently become funded, but Department of Social Services still refuses to fill them due to sudden discovery of being too

"short staffed" to do so, after legislators denied their request to outsource the waiver. It appears that DSS and Governor Malloy are holding these 13 people hostage unless and until legislators give them what they want and have even openly stated that the ransom for them to receive services will be legislative approval of outsourcing the ABI Waiver.

At the same time DSS is suddenly too "short staffed" to process just 13 brain injury survivors, they are asking to have over 100 people on the Autism Waiver added to their agency?? How can DSS overworked staff that cannot process 13 wait list slots for brain injury survivors take on yet another more than 100 fragile and vulnerable participants on a different Waiver?

From Families USA:

"waivers can help states expand their Medicaid programs or offer services that better meet the needs of Medicaid enrollees. However, State Plan Amendments and **waivers can also be used to cut services or restructure the program in ways that could hurt consumers.** "Advocates" (and legislators, survivors and supporters) **"should look at each state proposal carefully to determine whether it might help or hurt consumers. For changes that look harmful, advocates should get engaged and make their concerns known at the state and federal levels".**

**Just because it is a "Waiver" does not mean a promise of a good services. - CT is destroying existing Waiver services, manipulating legislators and holding brain injured citizens of CT, hostage. It appears DSS is NOT focused on the needs of the citizens of CT, but rather, in putting the needs of their state agency first. This is in concert with their recent change, which will further harm brain injured citizens of CT by replacing higher cost services with cheap, "Group Day Care" programs.**

I urge Legislators to oppose this proposal and protect the disabled citizens and others, in CT, from the "frustration" and administrative pique that has already led to a harmful and dangerous situation for very vulnerable brain injury survivors on the wait list.

Thank you,  
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