



## **Testimony H.B.5162 (Raised) AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Good Morning: Senator Steinberg, Senator Gerrantana, Senator Somers, Representative Srinivasan, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee. I want to thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on **H.B.5162 (Raised) AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES** on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA). I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association.

I speak in strong support of **H.B.5162 (Raised) AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.**

### **National Mental Health Facts, Stats, and Data**

Mental Health America is committed to promoting mental health as a critical part of overall wellness. We advocate for prevention services for all, early identification and intervention for those at risk, integrated services, care and treatment for those who need it, and recovery as the goal.

We believe that gathering and providing up-to-date data and information about disparities faced by individuals with mental health problems is a tool for change.

### **Key Findings**

**1 in 5 Adults have a mental health condition.** That's over 40 million Americans; more than the populations of New York and Florida **combined**.

**Youth mental health is worsening.** Rates of youth with severe depression increased from 5.9% in 2012 to 8.2% in 2015. Even with severe depression, 76% of youth are left with no or insufficient treatment

**More Americans have access to services...** Access to insurance and treatment increased, as healthcare reform has reduced the rates of uninsured adults. The greatest decrease in uninsured Adults with mental illnesses was seen in states that expanded Medicaid. **But most Americans still lack access to care.** 56% of American adults with a mental illness do not receive treatment. Even in Maine, the state with the best access, 41.4% of adults with a mental illness do not receive treatment.

**There is also a serious mental health workforce shortage.** In states with the lowest workforce, there is up **6 times** the individuals to only 1 mental health professional. This includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and psychiatric nurses combined. (Mental Health America)

### **Connecticut Statistics**

Connecticut has a population of approximately 3.6 million people and is the 4<sup>th</sup> most densely populated state in the nation. Close to 3.24% of adults (according to SAMHSA) in Connecticut live with serious mental health conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression.

Public mental health and addiction services in Connecticut are administered and provided by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Only 47.5% of adults with mental illness in Connecticut receive any form of treatment from either the public system or private providers (according to SAMHSA). The remaining 52.5% received no mental health treatment. According to Mental Health America, Connecticut is ranked 1 out of 50 states and Washington D.C. for providing access to mental health services.

Medicaid is a combined state and federal program that provides health coverage to people with low income, including those who are unable to work because of a mental health disability. Residents of Connecticut can apply for Medicaid (known as Husky in Connecticut) through the Connecticut Health Marketplace. (SAMHSA)

The literature abounds with information related to Mental Health and Addiction Services, lack of or insufficient services, adequate in house programs, inadequate in house programs, admissions without reimbursement, insufficient and/or lack of reimbursement etc. I believe it is essential we address the issue of Mental Health Services in the State of Connecticut. The statistics are daunting. It is essential we provide adequate services, and adequate reimbursement to address the growing needs of this population in Connecticut. I believe with the current Budget issues it is even more important that a study of funding services be developed to investigate and address the growing Mental Health needs of Connecticut

residents. The Connecticut Nurses Association urges the members of the legislature to be proactive in relation the impending crisis in Mental Health Services. Recent Budget issues have and will have a continued impact on access and provision of Mental Health Care in Connecticut.

Therefore, I urge you to support **H.B.5162 (Raised) AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.**

Thank you

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