



TESTIMONY OF
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March 16, 2018

SB 172 "AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO TREATMENT FOR OPIOID USE
DISORDER IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES"

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My name is Maureen Price-Boreland. I am the Executive Director for Community Partners in Action (CPA), an agency that has operated continuously in Connecticut for 143 years. CPA provides a myriad of services focused on behavioral change and we strongly support innovation in the criminal justice system. We work with people who are pre-release from prison; on probation, bail or parole; and in reentry.

CPA is a longtime partner with the CT Department of Correction (DOC) and Court Support Services Division (CSSD). We operate a DOC Work Release Program in Hartford, CSSD Transitional Housing in Hartford and Waterbury, and CSSD Alternative in the Community Programs in Hartford, Manchester and Waterbury.

In addition, CPA operates Hartford Reentry and Employment programs and oversees the Waterbury Reentry Center. CPA is also the lead agency for the Hartford Reentry Welcome Center set to open in July 2018.

Our staff is on the front line of reentry and have observed the devastating effects of opioid addiction---especially addiction to fentanyl---on people when they come home from prison. CPA has created a safe and secure environment for our participants; **however, during the past year we have dealt with approximately ten overdoses, one of which resulted in death.** The opioid crisis requires our programs to ensure staff are trained to recognize signs of potential overdose and to properly administer Naloxone, a medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose. All of the overdoses resulted in trauma for both the staff involved and residents who witnessed the events.

Just to illustrate the magnitude of substance abuse disorders among returning citizens in Hartford, we recently reviewed the Treatment and Program Assessment Instrument (TPAI) scores recorded by DOC for sentenced releases in 2016. The scores showed that **76.7% of those released in Hartford had a score of 3 or above** on the substance abuse portion of the assessment, indicating a need for some level of substance abuse treatment.

76.7% is a HUGE number.

Once released, many of the people CPA serves have to wait up to two months before they can get into a treatment program. Waiting only puts a person at high risk of recidivating, overdosing---or dying from an overdose.

Bill SB 172 has been referred to the Public Health Committee and would offer medication-assisted treatment (MAT) across all of Connecticut's correctional facilities. Evidence-based treatment approaches such as MAT are often needed to successfully overcome opioid addiction and maintain long term recovery. MAT can reduce cravings and withdrawal and therefore allow the person to be more focused on the necessary skills and resources for a successful re-entry into society. A successful re-entry contributes to lower recidivism and therefore benefits Connecticut as a whole.

Let's give people in prison the treatment they deserve so they can return home with a head start on maintaining their sobriety. **Community Partner in Action strongly endorses the passing of Bill SB 172.**