Appropriations Committee
HB 7148
March 1, 2019

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Susan Brosseau. I am the Chief Financial Officer of Adelbrook Behavioral and Developmental Services. I am here to comment on H.B. 7148, an Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2021, and Making Appropriations Therefor.

Adelbrook Behavioral and Developmental Services is a multi-service agency specializing in Autism Spectrum Disorder, developmental services, and behavioral health treatment. We have residential services, 5 schools, three therapeutic group homes, in-home and Day program services, and 8 CRS and CLA homes. We also have a store front dog biscuit business called the Bark-ery in Middletown, staffed with students from our schools. Our programs are located throughout Central CT, with students and residents coming to us from every community in the state.

This evening, I would like to specifically express my thanks for the services that we provide through contracts with DDS. At Adelbrook, we are appreciative of the support and cooperation we have received from DDS in providing CRS and CLA homes, as well as Day program services, to the population that we serve, which is primarily individuals with ASD. The population with ASD is different in many ways than the population that DDS typically serves. Many of our residents in our CRS and CLA homes have very high levels of need due to complex behavioral and physical challenges. Working in partnership with DDS has been critical to the success of the individuals in these homes and we hope to see additional future funding targeted at those with ASD. We are grateful to see funding included in Governor Lamont’s budget for DDS school graduates and age outs as many of the youth we serve will be in need of residential services once they age out of the DCF system.

We also appreciate that in the face of another difficult budget year, Governor Lamont has sought to limit the budget impact on individuals served by Adelbrook and our peer agencies. I am especially appreciative of the $14.75 per hour minimum wage that was established January 1, 2019, for staff at agencies funded by DDS. I have been privileged to routinely observe the work that our direct care staff perform with our students and residents, and our staff are very deserving of this minimum wage, and of course, so much more. I hope that you build upon the progress made last year and continue to increase funding so that we may provide regular wage increases and at least keep pace with inflation so that we may support to our incredibly well-deserving staff within our DDS programs and across all of our programs.
I also encourage DDS to continue to convert state-operated services to private sector agencies such as Adelbrook, and other agencies that you have seen and heard this evening. The private sector agencies provide high quality care at a lower cost than comparable state operations, and this is a win-win situation for all concerned.

Thank you.