Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Rayford Scott and I am a Mental Health Assistant 1 at the Young Adult Services Program (YAS) in Bridgeport. We are a 12 bed supervised apartment program that teaches young adults independent living skills so they can live independently in the community.

In addition, the program supports 25 young adults whom are currently living in the community on their own, teaching them the necessary skills to be able to maintain living in the community so they aren’t ending up in more expensive levels of care such as group homes, hospitals, and jail for example. This component of the program is unique and does not exist anywhere else in the state. In addition to teaching independent living skills, our program provides 24-7 transportation to employment, medical, dental and clinical appointments, case management, and recreational activities.

Most importantly we provide continuity of care in our staffing which allows us to follow our clients all throughout their treatment within YAS resulting in fewer hospital stays and incarcerations which translates to the state saving money. I work with a great team of 12 dedicated state employees who are all trained in trauma informed care for at risk youth. It takes a unique and experienced staff to service this population. YAS works with the most challenging young people with serious mental illness, trauma, and substance use disorders.

It takes time for a young adult to build a trusting relationship with a staff person; therefore continuity of care is so important. A major component of the model we base client care on emphasizes the importance of consistency, building structure/routine, and receiving consistent responses from the caregivers. When any turnover occurs, it’s yet another loss our clients have to cope with. Most often private agencies experience frequent turnover because of low pay and little to no benefits. Frequent staff turnover impacts our population negatively as we are often the main source of stability in our young adult’s lives.

YAS services has worked and helped to keep these client populations out of jail, hospitals and more expensive levels of care and most importantly helped them live independent lives. Please continue to fund and expand these vital services so that we may continue to support this vulnerable population.

Thank you for your time.