Feb. 25, 2019

Testimony on the Governor’s budget.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a woman living with 31 years in remission from opioid use disorder. Although my years of use are far in the past my memories of withdrawal while incarcerated can never be erased. There is absolutely no reason to withhold medication from an individual with a brain disease that will address their disease and mitigate symptoms of withdrawal as well as treat that disease.

The Department of Corrections treats Hypertension, Diabetes, Renal Disease, HIV, and Cardiac Disease to individuals incarcerated in our state. There should be no distinction between the disease of Substance Use Disorder and any other health issues that the population is experiencing.

I work in the field of Harm Reduction and am on the front lines in dealing with the current opioid crisis and overdose crisis in this state. I am watching far too many individuals being released from incarceration experiencing overdoses and death upon their return as a result of no access to treatment for this disease.

Withdrawal without medication is cruel and barbaric. Providing no treatment to individuals when evidence based and science based treatment that works exists is equally as horrific.

Thank you,

Carol Jones

Director of Harm Reduction

Alliance for Living

New London, CT.