March 4, 2019

Chairs Walker and Osten, Vice-Chairs Hartley, DiMassa and Horn, and Honored Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Nadine Horton and I am a research assistant at the Yale School of Medicine, but more importantly I am the sibling of a loved one in long-term recovery of a substance use disorder. I am writing to express my strong support of Governor Lamont’s budget proposal for FY 2020 – FY 2021 biennium for the expansion of the Department of Corrections Medication Assisted Treatment Program (MAT).

My sister served several jail terms at the York Correctional Institution in Niantic, Connecticut, all stemming from her substance use disorder. My family did not have access to the treatment programs and facilities that wealthier, White families had access to, and were at the mercy of whatever low-cost or state-funded options were available. While most of these programs were mediocre at best, my sister was finally able to get into a program that she could connect with and give her the help she so desperately needed. I am proud to say that my sister now has twelve years of recovery. However, this help came only after she cycled in and out of the criminal justice system for years and never received any treatment for her disorder.

While no one knows for sure, it is my firm belief that if my sister had access to treatment when first incarcerated, she would not have relapsed and returned to prison as many times as she did and experience the fear and stigma of being in a facility where no one was willing to help!

Families and communities are suffering because people who are incarcerated have no access to the help they so desperately need. Passing the proposal to expand the MAT program would help thousands of people suffering from substance use disorder and give them the chance to find and embrace recovery in a safe, supportive way.

Everyone knows someone touched by the illness of substance use disorder. Now imagine your loved one suffering from this disorder and being incarcerated, and having no access to treatment - wouldn’t you want to do everything in your power to help them?
Honored members of the Committee, I submit that it is within your power to help by passing Governor Lamont’s budget proposal for FY 2020 – FY 2021 biennium for the expansion of the Department of Corrections Medication Assisted Treatment Program (MAT), which I hope you will do.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nadine Horton

Research assistant, Yale School of Medicine

Family addiction advocate