Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

This testimony is submitted on behalf of Clifford Beers in New Haven, CT, where every year we provide behavioral health services, care coordination, and integrated programming to underserved children and families. For FY 2018, we served over 5,500 children across all programs as well as nearly 500 parents/caregivers. We touched the lives of an additional 5,700 individuals through clinical care, integrated services, trauma screening and professional development/training.

In short, we are committed to doing whatever is necessary -- through services that span mental health, physical health, and social determinants of health -- so that children, families and communities can move forward toward their best health, wellness and quality of life.

Backed by over 100 years of service to the community, we can tell you this; it is essential that you protect – and increase as needed – funding for community-based providers like Clifford Beers.

Why? Because we know the communities we benefit (many of us live within in them!), and they need the care we offer. We are uniquely positioned to impact those we serve, and our results prove that out. Some examples of our impact include:

- In our school-based work, we know there is an alarming rate of posttraumatic stress disorder in students. In New Haven Public Schools, nearly half of those assessed were near or at clinical levels for PTSD; that means children are sitting in classrooms re-living things like their family’s domestic violence episodes, or avoiding situations/places fraught with the memory of sexual abuse or community violence. It is entirely unreasonable to believe any student could learn under those circumstances, but because of our efforts, nearly half of those who received care for their PTSD symptomology were no longer at the clinical level of PTSD. The result? 39% improved their attendance over the previous year, and 52% had a higher GPA over the previous year.
- Also in schools, for children with complex physical, behavioral and social circumstances, a combination of clinical care and care coordination has impact; 50% of those receiving the combined care significantly reduced their school failure.
• In our outpatient clinic, 66% of parents and 56% of our providers report that, at discharge, the child served is no longer in the clinical range for problem severity, i.e., the child is within the better “normal” range at discharge.

• By providing home-based whole-family/whole-person integrated care to address mental health, physical health and social determinants of health, 72% of parents were activated to manage their child’s health while 59% were activated to manage their own health.
  
  o **Fiscal note:** In this program, before enrolling in care the spending per family was increasing by $101 per month, but spending per family post-enrollment reduced by $83 each month. Exponentially, the spending gap widens and becomes increasingly significant over time in a true breakaway from the traditional bell curve.

As you can see, our impact is both very personal and highly macro. Please know that we welcome the opportunity to review with you our impact in greater detail.

This legislative session will bring budget difficulties and may result in Clifford Beers -- and the nonprofit community -- again facing the threat of reduced funding.

Reducing that funding is a mistake.

Community providers cannot have impact without public funding, and for the population served by Clifford Beers – a child and family mental health provider – we encourage you to think beyond the impact stated above and consider what would happen in the absence of Clifford Beers and other community providers. The short- and long-term impact of untreated childhood trauma and related mental health issues could cost the State millions above the funding. For more on the costs of lack of treatment, please follow this [link](https://example.com).

We appreciate that Governor Lamont has sought to limit the budget impact on people served by community providers, but as you know, more than half of the state budget comprises “fixed costs” which are not subject to cuts. That percentage grows each year, and we appreciate the Governor’s tackling those costs. Still, funding for nonprofits is in whatever remains. The combination of ongoing budget shortfalls and growing fixed costs mean community nonprofits are a shrinking piece of a diminishing pie. Considering that we cannot raise taxes or charges, a lack of funding will surely result in essential services being denied to those most in need.

Cuts, then, are shortsighted, and they result in long-term, significant financial obligations far beyond those facing lawmakers today.

To help reconcile the tension, we urge you to maximize limited state funding by shifting more expensive state-operated programs into the community. **Connecticut has a decision – either keep the expensive status quo and serve fewer people, or begin making changes to the system and serve more people in need with great outcomes.** Community nonprofits can reduce state costs and meet the demand for services if you first take the necessary steps. This
would also help to bolster community providers as worthy employers and contributors to the local economic landscape.

Thank you for your time and attention. Your task is challenging, and we are grateful for your efforts to work through the morass in support of the children and families of Connecticut striving for health, resiliency and improved quality of life.

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