March 5, 2019
Appropriations Committee Human Services Public Hearing Testimony
Julie Peters, Executive Director, Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut

Chairpersons and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is David Bush. I am on the Board of Directors at the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut. I am submitting this testimony in regard to THE GOVERNOR’S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS. In his proposal, the Governor seeks to maintain level funding for the Services for Disabilities line which includes funding for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut. We applaud his decision not to cut this line, but encourage legislators to consider increasing the line (which has sustained a 40% cut since 2017).

As BIAC commemorates 38 years serving Connecticut residents, we acknowledge the small operating grant we receive from the Department of Social Services to provide entirely free resources and supports which the State is unable to provide. There is no other organization or state agency in Connecticut which provides the full range of brain injury support and education that BIAC offers.

The Department of Social Services contracts with BIAC to provide services required as part of the Medicaid ABI Waiver program. The contract with BIAC is used as evidence in five sections of the Waiver application showing that DSS is meeting the obligations of this federal program. In the amendments to both Waivers which has recently been proposed by DSS, BIAC is the only organization approved to provide advanced training for case managers.

No one else does what BIAC does, including the Department of Social Services (DSS), which is why DSS contracts with BIAC to provide the many essential services that it is not equipped to offer. BIAC meets the needs of the State’s brain injury survivors on behalf of DSS as efficiently as it does effectively.

- BIAC provides all services at a fraction of what it would cost DSS to provide these services.
- BIAC’s work on behalf of DSS reduces the brain injury-related workload at DSS.
- BIAC provides critical training and consultation to most of the State key agencies including DSS, VA, DCF, DPH, DOE, DOC, DMHAS, DDS, and BRS.

Despite amazing advances, the medical community is not able to restore “life as they knew it” to those who survive or to their loved ones. Even BIAC cannot to do that — but we CAN and DO provide brain injury survivors and their families with the ongoing support and resources needed to optimize recovery, and that makes BIAC a genuinely critical lifeline on what is always a very long and difficult journey back.

With BIAC the State’s de facto resource for brain injury services, increasing BIAC’s operating grant would significantly impact the delivery of services and supports we are able to offer, including those required under the ABI Medicaid Waiver, to thousands of Connecticut residents and the ever-increasing number of returning veterans whose lives have been shattered by the experience of brain injury.
We appreciate and are thankful for your support in the past and hope that you will continue to support our mission by committing to increasing funding for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut. Thank you for your time.

David Bush
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