STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR

MIRIAM DELPHIN-RITTMON, PH.D.
COMMISSIONER

Testimony by Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Before the Judiciary Committee

Good Morning Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and I am here today to testify on S.B. 16 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADULT USE OF CANNABIS. I want to thank the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you about this proposed bill.

This bill recognizes that the trend nationally and in nearby states, including Massachusetts, Maine and Vermont, is to legalize the adult use of recreational cannabis. Neighboring states of New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island are all considering legalized adult use cannabis. The trend to legalize recreational cannabis use means that cannabis will be more easily accessed by Connecticut citizens. This bill offers a thoughtful framework in Connecticut for the cultivation, manufacture, sale, possession, and use of cannabis that prioritizes public health, public safety, and social justice.

DMHAS is a health care agency that provides prevention, treatment and recovery services to individuals with behavioral health conditions. DMHAS provides a wide range of services across the continuum of substance use services from prevention through treatment and recovery. DMHAS treatment and recovery services are the safety net services for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured. The agency’s services address both legal and illegal substances that may result in addiction which is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking, continued use despite harmful consequences, and long-lasting changes in the brain.

S.B. 16 protects public health by providing access to safe products and preventing advertising and retail locations that would appeal to children. Section 39 of the bill allows the Department the opportunity to make recommendations to mitigate the misuse of cannabis with a particular focus on individuals under twenty-one years of age.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee on this important issue. I would be happy to answer any question you may have at this time.