



**MARCH 25, 2021**

**Human Services Committee**

**Public Hearing on:**

**H.B. 6636 An Act Concerning COVID-19 and Enhanced Federal Medicaid Funding**

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Berthel, Representative Case and members of the Human Services Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 6636 An Act Concerning COVID-19 and Enhanced Federal Medicaid Funding. The American Rescue Plan is expected to bring \$10 billion into Connecticut, with over \$4 billion going directly to state and local governments. Connecticut is set to receive a significant increase in federal matching funds for Medicaid, including a 10% increase for Home and Community Based Services as well as the continuation of the 6.2% increase that began in the Spring of 2020. While nonprofit providers were allocated a portion of the Coronavirus Relief Fund, those funds were spent months ago, and the State has not used the increased federal Medicaid match to increase rates or otherwise compensate providers.

Community nonprofits have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many never closed their doors and have been meeting the needs of the communities they serve despite the risks. COVID-19 brought unanticipated and unbudgeted costs and operational challenges for community providers, and for many, Medicaid is a primary or significant source of funding.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the impact of inadequate funding for nonprofit services and brought unanticipated and unbudgeted costs and operational challenges for many community nonprofits, such as:

- Providing hazard pay for essential workers on the front lines with a higher risk of exposure;
- Procuring expensive and hard to find Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies;
- Creating telehealth services seemingly overnight, and purchasing necessary computers, cybersecurity, online meeting platforms and training for both staff and people receiving services.
- Many community nonprofits never closed their doors even as the pandemic worsened.

No additional funding was provided by the State of Connecticut to cover additional expenses during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as any funding to pay staff who were frightened to work during the pandemic, and certainly in a program with a COVID-19 confirmed positive client who still needed our supports. Fortunately, we were the recipient of Federal funding during 2020 to cover these additional costs, however, the expenses continue in 2021, and no Federal funding has yet been made available to the community providers.

As you may know, community nonprofits have **requested that the legislature appropriate \$461 million over the next five years for community nonprofits**. Since 2007, community nonprofits have lost at least \$461 million in state funding that has not kept pace with inflation or adequately covered increased costs and demand for services over the last thirteen years. COVID-19 has only exacerbated those challenges.

Because a substantial portion of the \$461 million restoration for community nonprofits will be to provide increased Medicaid rates, the **enhanced FMAP is a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Connecticut General Assembly to address these needs**. This influx of federal funding combined with the state's strong Rainy Day Fund, and more than \$400 million in unexpended Medicaid funds, puts the state in the unique position to use those funds to directly support nonprofit programs and fulfill their needs without complicating the state budget process.



Demand continues to increase as funding is cut. As a representative for over 300 people with intellectual disabilities, over half of which are living in group homes, I thank you for taking the time to consider my input and urge you to support the Act and ensure the dissemination of funds is equitable. We think, this year, above all others, has heightened the sense of urgency and need for adequate funding.

Congress intended for the American Rescue Plan to help Americans across the country get to the other side of COVID-19, and this bill would provide significant support to help community nonprofits emerge from COVID-19 stronger and more ready to meet the needs of our communities.

We urge the Committee to support H.B. 6636.

Sincerely,  
Becky Blazejowski  
Chief Financial Officer  
[bblazejowski@midstatearc.org](mailto:bblazejowski@midstatearc.org)  
203-238-8364