



Written Testimony on H.B. 5005: An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending 6/30/2021

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Sabrina Trocchi and I am the President/Chief Executive Officer of Wheeler Clinic, Inc. Wheeler provides a comprehensive continuum of mental health and substance abuse recovery, primary care, community justice, education, child welfare, early childhood and prevention and wellness services to over 30,000 medically underserved and vulnerable children, families, and adults in communities across Connecticut. The individuals and families who come to us for care include some of the most vulnerable populations in our state including individuals with serious and frequently co-occurring mental illness and addiction, co-morbid medical disorders and histories of exposure to trauma and violence. As a federally qualified health center in the Hartford, New Britain, Bristol, and Waterbury communities, Wheeler offers cost-effective integrated care aimed at improving health outcomes and the care experience of individuals served, while containing the growth of health care costs by reducing unnecessary utilization of resource-intensive services. The services we provide are highly effective in helping these individuals and families function successfully in the community.

Please accept my written testimony on H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium ending June 30, 2021.

As you are aware, community nonprofits provide essential services in every city and town in Connecticut, serving people in need and employing tens of thousands. They are what make Connecticut a great place to live and work. I respectfully **request that the legislature appropriate \$461 million over 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. Please:

1. Commit to increasing funding by the full \$461 million, or 28%, by Fiscal Year 2025;
2. Appropriate \$128 million (a state net of \$67 million after federal reimbursement) in new funding for community nonprofits in Fiscal Year 2021, a 7% increase;
3. Index increases to inflation, to ensure that state funding will keep pace with increased costs in the future.

Specific to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), I oppose the Governor's proposal to cut \$5.4 million from Board and Care for Children – Short-term and Residential. Short-term and Residential fund crucial programs that provide at-risk children removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect or other high-risk circumstances, a safe, stabilizing experience with the support of caring staff in a short-term, home-like, therapeutic setting. These homes are a critical part of the service delivery system and we respectfully ask the Committee to restore this funding.

In reference to the Department of Social Services (DSS) budget, please support the Governor's proposal to add \$47.1 million in funding to reflect caseload growth distributed to HUSKY B, Medicaid, Old Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind, Aid to the Disabled, TANF, Connecticut Home Care Program, Community Residential Services, and State Administered General Assistance. Too often, caseload growth is not funded in the state budget and demand has increased for these crucial services.

Thank you for this opportunity to be heard. I am happy to answer any questions that you have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sabrina Trocchi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

Sabrina Trocchi, PhD, MPA

President & Chief Executive Officer

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