



Good evening Representative Walker, Senator Osten, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Joyce Lewis. I am the Executive Vice President of Key Human Services, Inc. a private nonprofit business supporting individuals with disabilities across the lifespan statewide.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on H.B. 5005.

Tonight I am testifying regarding our Individual and Family Support Division which includes In Home Support and Autism services.

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) has been in place for Autism Waiver services for a year now through the Department of Social Services (DSS). In Home Support operates under the Department of Developmental Services and will be moving to EVV this year.

Last year, DSS did not fund the startup costs and did not increase the rates to cover the new burdens of administrative monitoring. The burden of clearing exceptions and entering schedules creates an undue hardship on this already underfunded program. Our staff provide services for 23 individuals with 20 staff. 25-38% of visits result in some type of exception to clear. This work takes hours per week in addition to matching our programmatic documentation to the times of the check in and out for EVV.

As the Department of Developmental Services partners with Department of Social Services to implement Electronic Visit Verification this year, I ask you to fund the infrastructure necessary for providers to undertake this additional mandate. Our agency currently uses EVV with our Autism waiver work and knows firsthand the administrative time required for this process let alone the startup costs of electronic devices, data entry and training. Rate increases are necessary to support the administrative time for daily exception clearing and resubmission. Additionally, when using this process with people living on their own, it is important to bring your own device as the person may not wish to share their phone. Each staff in our mobile workforce has an electronic device with cellular service.

For these reasons, a rate increase is necessary to support this additional requirement. It has been suggested that EVV will be a cost saving addition. However, if indeed there are any cost savings these would be realized at the state level, based on a failure to pay for services rendered but with exceptions.

There are no cost savings for providers just costs. Please increase the rates to support these underfunded programs that enhance the independent lives of the individuals that we support.

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.

Thank you for your consideration!