



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

NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR

MIRIAM E. DELPHIN-RITTMON,
Ph.D.

Testimony of Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., Commissioner
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
Before the Appropriations Committee
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Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). I am pleased to offer testimony on H.B. No. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021.

DMHAS is a health care service agency whose mission is to promote the overall health and wellness of persons with behavioral health needs, with a focus on prevention, treatment and promotion of recovery. DMHAS is an essential partner in ensuring the safety of our communities through the identification and management of risks related to mental illness and addiction. In FY19, DMHAS provided services to over 104,000 persons experiencing a serious mental health or substance use condition.

The DMHAS system of care is a public/private partnership delivering mental health and substance use disorder inpatient and outpatient services through our state-operated facilities and contracts with over 165 non-profit community-based agencies statewide. The DMHAS system of care includes thirteen Local Mental Health Authorities and two distinct hospitals in Middletown, Connecticut Valley Hospital and Whiting Forensic Hospital.

The Department remains committed to its core mission of promoting wellness, preventing illness and strengthening a recovery-oriented system of care for people with serious behavioral health conditions. This budget maintains services to individuals who rely on the Department and supports a minimum wage increase for DMHAS-funded private, non-profit service providers as the state moves to a minimum wage of \$15 per hour by 2023.

This budget aligns with the DMHAS mission and vision by continuing to focus on funding for community services as we advance our recovery-oriented system of care. To that end, the budget adds \$3.0 million dollars to the DMHAS budget to support twenty community placements for individuals currently receiving treatment at Connecticut Valley Hospital and other DMHAS inpatient facilities.

House Bill 5005 includes the Governor's initiative to streamline state government operations by the centralization of human resources and labor relations staff under the Department of Administrative

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Services (DAS) and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). This initiative modernizes the human resources and labor relations functions across state agencies and ensures the uniform administration of processes, systems and functions. This adjustment realigns funding for forty-five DMHAS staff who will report to DAS and to OPM as a result of the centralization.

DMHAS core services will be maintained and will continue to promote the overall health and wellness of persons with behavioral health needs, including those impacted by the opioid crisis, through an integrated network of holistic, comprehensive, effective and efficient mental health and substance use services and recovery supports that foster dignity, respect and self-sufficiency. Our services and supports are culturally responsive, attentive to trauma, build on personal, family and community strengths and focus on promoting each person's recovery and full citizenship. Integral to all services and supports is an emphasis on prevention, identifying and managing risk and promoting safety. Some examples of services that promote this mission include inpatient and outpatient treatment programs, emergency services, medication monitoring and housing supports.

DMHAS will continue to evaluate our service system and respond to behavioral healthcare trends by using enhanced data analysis to inform decision making, evaluating state-operated and contracted services to maximize resources and promoting evidenced-based and best practices.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Committee today. I will be happy to take any questions you may have at this time.