

## Appropriations Committee Testimony

### Public Hearing on:

### [H.B. 5005](#) An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021

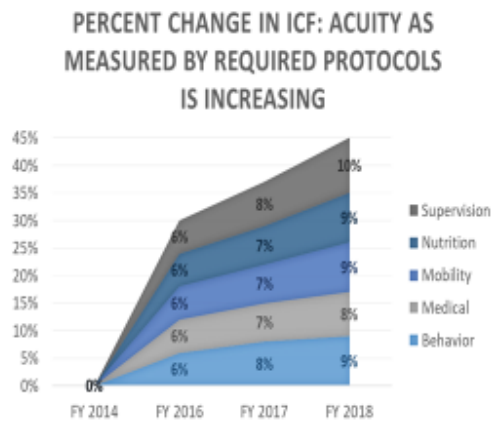
Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Heidi Chelednik, and I am the Director of CT Licensed Residential Services of Ability Beyond, a private, non-profit provider of community services for people with disabilities. We serve 3,000 people every year, and our funders include DSS, DDS and DMHAS. Our services span across most of Western Connecticut, and our community includes 1,000 employees, 320 community employers, and over 2,000 family members.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021.

Today I am speaking on behalf of the 117 people with severe disabilities we serve in the 20 community ICF homes we operate. Our numbers speak for themselves. The acuity of the people we serve has risen dramatically in the last few years-both because people are aging, and because the state is now prioritizing care to those on the emergency waiting list and most in urgently in need of services. We continue to make the difficult decisions to decrease our staffing hours in each of these homes even though the needs are greater; the care needs of individuals in these homes include intense medical care like catheter and ostomy care, many individuals require two staff to transfer them in bed, to the shower and for toileting, hands on support to prevent individuals from falling when they walk and monitoring due to severe choking risks. The rise in acuity also results in more medical appointments, more medication administration and more health/safety protocols. Because of the amount of care to keep individuals safe and healthy and the increased cost of care without increased funding we are unable to get individuals out in the community to do activities that they enjoy. We have been forced to reduce many of our staff ratios from 3 staff for 6 people to 2 staff for 6 people, folks are at a greater risk for falls when 2 staff are attending to the needs of one individual. We are unable to meet the needs of the community by no longer admitting individuals with greater medical or behavioral needs, this means they will need to stay at home with family or stay in nursing homes.

We need your help to continue our programs for Connecticut's most fragile citizens. The chart below provides historic data on the level of funding annually versus the increase in acuity of the individuals we serve.



Only received rate reductions since 2008 (net of pass-through changes)

Increase in expense of only 4% over 11 years (less than .36 % per year)

## HISTORICAL ICF-DD REVENUE AND EXPENSE



I am along with providers and families from around the state to 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.
4. Give private provider Intermediate Care Facilities, which are vital, community based services caring for Connecticut's most needy, adequate rates to stay open. This is a small DSS program which desperately needs your attention immediately.

Thank you.