

Appropriations Committee Health Subcommittee
Public Hearing
Friday, February 21, 2020
4:00 pm in Room 2C of the LOB

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

My name is Chris McNaboe. I am CEO of Horizons -- a private nonprofit agency in operation for 41 years providing individualized services for people with developmental disabilities where they live, learn, work, and play.

I wish to comment on H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021.

Nonprofits are dependent on the State for funding and have limited options in the face of budget shortfalls. We can't raise taxes or charges. We have grown Horizons person centered services over the past 41 years to address the changing needs of Connecticut's citizen with intellectual disabilities.

Private Providers are the major work force in delivering services for DDS.

Our staff are the ones supporting 90% of **all** people in Supported Living and group homes. They cannot "call out" in a snow storm or other bad weather.

Our staff are the ones job coaching 92% of the people in Employment and Day services through DDS. They are part of Connecticut's economic engine ,working to support people with intellectual disabilities in business such as : The Coast Guard Academy, Groton Sub Base, UCONN, Eastern Ct State University and Mystic Aquarium to name a few.

Our Staff provide **ESSENTIAL** services to Connecticut's families and individuals with intellectual disabilities. We need to be included in the group of essential service providers that receive automatic COLA increases annually. **If not now , when?**

We invest over 100 hours of training in our employees. They are trained in medication administration, safely supporting people who have behavioral challenges, HIPPA compliance, Person Centered program development, Abuse and Neglect Prevention and First Aid/CPR for example. They are professionals.

As you know, more than half of the state budget comprises "fixed costs" which are not subject to cuts. That percentage grows each year.

There is a valued role for DDS in performing licensing and quality assurance. Let the private sector deliver the high quality services. Community nonprofits can reduce state costs and meet the demand for services.

Thank You.