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Committee

Good evening Senators Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Marc DeGregorio, and I am also a member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) , NAMI Elm City. Nami is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for all those affected by mental health conditions. NAMI Connecticut, and its local affiliates provide support groups, educational programs, and advocacy for individuals, families and children impacted by mental health conditions.

My daughter who had early onset Schizophrenia at age 15, has received services and care from DMHAS budget for years. It made an enormous difference to her and the entire family. We certainly DO NOT want any less funding for DMHAS and though we support the current governor's budget funding we urge future increases in the funding. This is a life or death issue for many clients and families.

I understand the states's continuing fiscal challenges and the difficult decisions facing legislators. At the same time, certain state services and supports must be prioritized because of the increasing needs for services and the greater health care and human costs, resulting from short-term funding cuts. I am asking you to consider increasing funding for DMHAS behavioral services, for housing supports and for services for high need individuals in the DMHAS Budget.

Thank You for your time and attention.

Marc DeGregorio