



SEIUHealthcare®
United for Quality Care

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Diana Giordana, Crisis Clinician LPC
United Services
SEIU District 1199 New England
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Diana Giordana and I am a Crisis Clinician Licensed Professional Counselor with United Services. I have been working in the mental health field since 2007 and have been with United Services for a year and a half now. I have never worked at an agency that has this fast paced of a revolving door when it comes to their employees.

Simply put, a lack of funding for private non-profits equals low pay, which in turn means a lack of stability for all workers. We have no bonus incentives for our hard work, or loyal years spent on the job, and raises do not exist unless you earn a higher degree. This being said, I personally earned a \$.20/hr increase in wages for attaining my license last year. \$.20. = \$8/wk Clinicians are coming in green from school, earning their supervision hours, and once they attain their license, it's back out the revolving door to find a considerably higher paying job for equal, or at this point, less responsibility.

Working for an agency that does not show gratitude for its loyal employees, creates an environment of low morale, low job satisfaction, and high burn out. And what about our clients?

It isn't fair for them to not know if they will walk in to a new clinician every few months because their assigned clinician has left. It isn't therapeutic for our client's to have to start over every few months, and break the progress of their treatment because their therapist can't afford to work for the agency anymore. It isn't fair for our clinicians that do remain, to take on larger and larger caseloads. One clinician cannot give the same therapeutic treatment to 85 clients.

We want to stay because we like working with each other. We love what we do. But when clinicians start breaking down because they are overworked with no clinician support, and given the responsibilities of another, or two other clinicians, we collectively become weak. We are not working at our optimal best, therefore, we cannot provide our optimal best. And this is not only NOT fair to our clinicians, but unfair, non-supportive nor therapeutic for our clients.

This is not about greed and making the most money we can. This is about the real life struggle for a middle-class employee to earn a living and be able to support their

families with incomes that are \$1,500 a year less than the average salary in the Wyndham Area AND \$3,400 a year less than the National Average for Clinicians. And as you all know, Minimum Wage is increasing to \$15 an hour in 2023... In order to be on a level playing field with this trend, our clinicians would need an \$8/hr increase over the next 3 years.

Please fund our services. Thank you for your time.