

Testimony for Bill #HB05005

Good Evening, Sen. Osten, Rep. Walker and members of the appropriation committee. My name is Michael Askew, Director of Recovery Advocacy for CCAR, CT Community for Addiction Recovery. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you in support of the DHMAS Budget.

I remember waking up in a dark, cold, jail cell, to the smell of stale body odor, wondering, how did I get here again. It was a familiar process that I had done 6 other times. You see, I had just been released 2 months prior after serving 20 months and here I am again. But when I was released in 1992, I found hope in 12 step fellowships and my life began to get better. Today I am so grateful!

Today, many people now have benefitted from multiple pathways of recovery and all are a cause for celebration. With our state experiencing an Opioid Crisis, DMHAS has responded in numerous ways to bringing hope to the hopeless. Since the emergence of recovery community centers, people have found a place that nurtures hope and gives inspiration. This has been more evident in recent years with an increase of attendance at all our centers. Recovery Centers is a safe, transforming power that resonates in the hearts of those who come and find a welcoming place of hope.

My experience as the Bridgeport Recovery Community Center Manager for 12 years has been so rewarding to see lives blossom and they began to help nurture others. What an awesome opportunity to see transformed people transform people! There becomes a strong connection to the recovery community and the center becomes a breeding ground for building good relationships, strengthening one's spiritual growth and allowing people to give back among many other benefits. Volunteer opportunities happen and it gives one a sense of self-worth. They are given scholarships to our Recovery Coach Academy, the global leader in recovery coaching. They come back full of passion to share the Art of Recovery with other recoverees. Employment has come to many. Transformed people transform people.

You will hear other testimonies from people who lives has been touched by CCAR in some way or another. I would encourage you if you already haven't to visit a recovery center.

You will be amazed at the energy that emerges!

I would hope that in the future we will see more Recovery Community Centers in the state. Support DMHAS with continuing to support their budget and extend their funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michael Askew