

**Testimony Before the Appropriations Committee**  
**February 21, 2020**  
**DMHAS BUDGET HEARING**  
**H.B. No. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM**  
**ENDING JUNE 30, 2021**  
**CHLOE KELLY**

Hello, Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Chloe Kelly. I am a registered voter in the City of Bridgeport. I am here to testify regarding **House Bill No. 5005—*An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021.***

I've been a member of Bridge House in Bridgeport, and a Catchment Area Council meeting attendee for 5 years. My Borderline Personality Disorder is extremely treatment resistant. In plain words, that means that I want to kill myself fairly often. It's a fact of my life. You simply can't work a stable job when you're hospitalized at least once a year. Bridge House gives me somewhere to go, but more importantly, it makes me feel useful. There's work to do when I get there, paperwork to collate, a newsletter to type—and so much more.

So often I get treated as a child because of my mental illness, but never at Bridge House. They respect my intellect and personhood. It seems so small, but it's not. Bridge House is helping me go back to school for public health. I hope to eventually get my master's degree. The system needs more consumer voices: I want that to start with me. I am truly grateful that programs like Bridge House continue to be funded by the Department of Mental Health and Addictions Services. For me, literally, it has been a matter of life and death.

The Catchment Area Councils have also played a huge role in my recovery. It's so empowering to have a seat at the table with your providers. I get to show them where treatment gaps occur because I experience so many of them. If the Catchment Area Council meetings didn't exist, providers wouldn't know how they're failing people because they would never meet with us as equals but would be reduced to meeting with us as patients.

Thank you for your time and for listening to my testimony.