

Good Evening, Sen. Osten, Rep. Walker and members of the appropriation committee. My name is Dawn Smyth and I am a recovering addict. My journey started April 22, 2015. I am here in support of the DHMAS Budget.

Before entering the world of recovery, I was a mess! People labeled me a menace to society.

1. I lost my family, friends, and associates. But, most importantly, I lost myself.
2. I was homeless.

I slept in abandoned houses, cars, bus stops, outside in the park (under trees), and walked around in all types of weather because I had nowhere to go. I had to find ways and means to eat. I found myself doing despicable and disgraceful things just to get my next drug.

I was first introduced to the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) on April 22, 2015, when my IOP (Intensive Outpatient Program) group had been taken on a field trip. Upon entering the center, we were required to sign in at the reception desk. While signing in, I was greeted with "How Can I Help You With Your Recovery Today?" Then this beautiful, young lady volunteer walked around the desk and greeted me with a hug. That was the most impressive and heart-felt greeting I had ever had. I felt if one person had that much interest in my recovery, I wanted to know more.

I was especially touched when I heard Michael Askew's testimony and how CCAR has helped him grow in his recovery and stated how long he had been in recovery. I thought to myself "If CCAR could do that for him, what could they do for me? I have been in and out of recovery since 2015 and if it wasn't for CCAR's doors being open, I know I'd not be alive today.

I have been afforded many opportunities through CCAR, and their resources, I am a Volunteer Recovery Coach. I have received many other certificates relating to recovery and have had opportunities to tell my testimony to other recovering addicts, but most importantly I know who Dawn REALLY is.

I would like to have the Appropriations Committee consider increasing the DMHAS Budget for providing more Recovery Community Centers. Please allow more people to connect to recovery.

Thank you for your time and consideration.