



SEIUHealthcare®
United for Quality Care

February 26, 2021
Laurice Brown, LPN
Manson Youth Institution
District 1199NE
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Laurice Brown and I am a LPN at Manson Youth Institution in Cheshire, CT. I have worked at Manson Youth for 5 years and DOC for 15 years. Even though it can be stressful, I honestly enjoy my job and caring for my patients.

I am testifying today to urge the committee to reject the \$1.3 million in cuts that the Governor has proposed to Inmate Medical Services in the DOC budget and to instead increase funding and invest \$15 million in workers like me.

My co-workers and I have worked hard to keep our patients healthy- and alive - during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, we were already working short staffed. We came before this Committee in 2019 to ask for increased funding for Inmate Medical Services. Here we are again in 2021 still asking for the same thing. If you add in the pandemic and the governor's proposed \$1.3 million in cuts to Inmate Medical Services you put our patients at increased risk for medical errors due to overworked staff being tired from constant mandated overtime and you continue to have a lack of adequate preventative and rehabilitative care that can reduce recidivism.

I myself was mandated every day that I reported to work, the entire month of December 2020 and the beginning of January of this year. I was not alone. If you do not prevent these cuts, matters are only going to get worse for me, my coworkers and the patients that we work so hard for. For example, at times it's hard to get the needed supplies to care for our patients. With the proposed budget cuts, it will be even more difficult.

At Manson Youth where I work, there have been times that I have worked alone due to staff shortage. Other times, Manson's health services unit has had to be shut down overnight because we just did not have the needed staffing. Each time that our health services unit has had to be shut down, this put our patients in danger. I know that my co-workers and I do not want to continue seeing our patients at risk.

Hiring more staff by investing \$15 Million in Inmate Medical Services would help to expand preventative care for inmates, create a safer environment for staff, and produce healthier communities for all of us. In addition, the state would save money because a new hire's pay rate would be a lot less than paying the constant mandated overtime that is currently being paid. I urge you to disregard the cuts requested in the Governor's budget and work with us going forward to find a way to help us provide the best care to our patients. Thank You for your time.