

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
March 2, 2021
DMHAS BUDGET HEARING
H.B. No. 6439 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS
THEREFOR.

Angela Benson

Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am here to testify regarding H.B. No. 6439 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

My name is Angela Benson and I am a registered voter in Waterbury Ct. I am a member of the Independence Center in Waterbury. Even though we have not been able to attend in person, we still use their services and support. I was affected by Covid-19 in November, I am a Breast Cancer survivor, I had to have a bilateral mastectomy. Chemotherapy caused my electrolytes levels to go haywire. I still need to go to the cancer center twice a week for magnesium infusions. After getting Covid-19, I was unable to receive my magnesium for 6 to 8 weeks, causing my levels to fall so low that it affected my heart I ended up in the E.R. with A-fib. I also suffer from rapid heartbeat. My heart has raced over 200 beats a minute and had to be shocked twice in ambulance, while I was awake!

Wheeler Clinic is also very important to me. I go there for my physical and mental health and I use the Pharmacy in their building! Also, I feel that the idea of using peer respite rather than having to go straight to the Hospital makes a lot of sense, and would be less expensive.

Please increase the funding for these essential non-profit programs that benefit so many.

Also, I respectfully request that the committee support the following proposals and expansions from the Governor's budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS):

- I support the proposed budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' Housing Supports and Services line at \$23.4 million in each year of the biennium.

- I request a new targeted investment of \$2.25 million in the DMHAS' Housing Supports and Services line to provide supportive services to 300 households in scattered-site and development units.
- I request \$375,000 in new funding in the DMHAS' Housing Supports and Services line for enhanced outreach services that would enable us to better identify individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

I support the Governor's proposal to provide an additional \$4 million in FY22 and \$7.2 million in FY23 in DMHAS for continued discharges from Connecticut Valley Hospital, including 30 new Money Follows the Person placements.

- I request the addition of \$352,500 in each year of the biennium for wrap-around services for 47 individuals anticipated to receive federal HUD Mainstream vouchers during FY22.
- I support the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance proposal to restore \$461 million over five years to community nonprofits. Funding for nonprofits, including those working to end homelessness, does not adequately cover increased costs and demands for services.

Thank you for your time.