

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.

Annette Bombaci

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

My name is Annette Bombaci and I am a proud registered voter from Waterbury Connecticut.

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.

I am a member of Mental Health Connecticut's Independence Center and have been a part of the program since I was 18, and I am now 43. This non-profit organization has helped me get a job, go to college, advocate for legislative issues, and just plain function as mental health consumer. I am asking for your help because the funding has been cut over the past 10 years and we need increased funding to keep the program going. There are so many people that need these services and without them, our lives wouldn't be so good. Now is the time to give more since there is extra to give in the state's budget.

As mental health consumers, these non-profit organizations help us function in our communities. I need these programs and so do many others. This past year has been especially hard with the pandemic and we need our services more than ever.

I am in your corner when I vote every year and now I need you to be in my corner. Please stick by us in our time of need and increase the budget for non-profit programs as they do the most work with the least funding. I would also like you to consider Peer-based respite programs for our state and funding for supportive housing and rental support. The ball is in your court. Can you stand by us like we've always stood by you?

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 listening to my testimony today.