

DMHAS APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING
Tuesday March 2, 2021

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Friendship Service Center, located in New Britain, CT. I have been a volunteer at the agency, in many capacities, for over 20 years. I am currently in my 2nd year as President of the Board of Directors. The FSC serves a most vulnerable population, a difficult task under normal conditions, but during the pandemic? A new challenge every hour of the day.

- Where to isolate a client who tests positive for COVID?
- How to provide grab and go meals?
- How to feed those who are in isolation?
- How to staff the isolation space?
- How to keep in touch with your clients when you can't be together in person?
- How to keep the morale of both staff and clients elevated?
- How to work remotely when so much of what you need that pertains to your clients is in your office?
- How to provide emergency cold weather shelter?
- What to do without our volunteers who cannot come in?
- How do we raise funds if we can't hold our normal fundraisers?
- And the list goes on...all at additional cost to normal operation.

The staff at the FSC, are all frontline workers. For almost a year, they have worked harder than ever, in the midst of increased anxiety, for both the clients and themselves. We have been connecting with other community agencies in an attempt to share resources, because we are all in the same boat. **An increase in funding would help in SO many ways.**

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Sharon Chamberlain