

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.

Carol Gee

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

My name is Carol Gee and I am 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 also receive services from Grandview Behavioral Health for the past 15 years and have taken medication for 20 years. I am also an advocate.

Because of my mental health I am mentally challenged. While being involved with mental health, I have learned how to live stable and I see the unfortunate effects of what living without stability can do. Like the outcome of not paying rent and being evicted and not having a place to call home. Also I have seen the impact of a bad decision snowballing into another bad decision resulting in a disheveled mess. When somebody takes a bad turn in life it leaves them an open target for predators- whether they be a drunkard, a sexist, or a drug dealer, the victim becomes vulnerable to the one that wants to target him/her.

These things happen to a person when they don't have a secure place to call home. Home is where the heart is. Mental Health support is necessary to a mentally challenged individual because when a person is not putting their important necessities first, like paying rent, they will end up having to find a new home or face eviction, which can have a bad effect on credit history and cause a person to be turned down.

Peer support can be used to help someone manage their income and set a budget. The person who needs the help should learn that they have to do the work so that they can put a plan in action. In other words, the person has to take the first step and trust in their own instincts because one of the

first things that happens when one stumbles is that he/she has to the one who helps themselves.

Covid-19 had a wounding impact on us all. I am sure that we all had to find secure ground to stand on and stabilize and get through it with the help of our God.

Please consider the many people who are mentally challenged and do not place to rent as their first priority. Please increase the funding available to give us enough money for the people who have mental health issues.

I also ask that your support 5 Peer Respite in the DMHAS regions. They need to be staffed by people with lived experience in the field of mental health and certified as Intentional Peer Support.

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 very much.