

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 30, 2023 AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS
THEREFORE
Chloe Kelly

Good evening, Sen. Osten, Rep. Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Chloe Kelly and I am a registered voter in the City of Bridgeport.

I am testifying regarding the budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, **H.B. No. 6439, An Act Concerning the State Budget for The Biennium Ending June 30, 2023 And Making Appropriations Therefore.**

I have been a member of Bridge House in Bridgeport, and Catchment Area Council meeting attendee for 5 years. My borderline personality disorder is extremely treatment resistant. In plain words, that means that I want to kill myself fairly often. It's a fact of my life. You simply can't work a stable job when you are hospitalized at least once a year. Bridge House gives me somewhere to go, but more importantly, it makes me feel useful. There's work to do when I get there, paperwork to collate, a newsletter to type.

So often I get treated as a child because of my mental illness, but never at Bridge House. They respect my intellect and personhood. It seems so small, but it's not. Bridge House is helping me go back to school for public health. I hope to eventually get my master's degree. The system needs more consumer voices: I want that to start with me.

The Catchment Area Councils have also played a huge role in my recovery. It's so empowering to have a seat at the table with your providers. I get to show them where treatment gaps occur because I experience so many of them. If the Catchment Area Council meetings didn't exist, providers wouldn't know how they're failing people because they would never meet with us as equals and not as patients.

I am respectfully requesting that the funding for mental health services in Connecticut be increased, as these programs and services have literally been a lifeline for me.

Thank you for listening to my testimony.