

**Public Hearing on:**  
**H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023,  
And Making Appropriations Therefor.**  
**Health Subcommittee**  
**Tuesday, March 2, 10:00 am**

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Emily Morrison, I am a Putnam resident and the Director of Development at United Services, Inc. in Dayville.

United Services is the Local Mental Health Authority for 21 towns in Northeastern Connecticut. We are a nonprofit organization providing more than 30 programs to our community, including Outpatient Mental Health, Substance Abuse Treatment, Family Programs, and Crisis Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, And Making Appropriations Therefor.

I am here to respectfully **request that the legislature appropriate \$461 million over five years for community nonprofits.**

United Services is an essential healthcare provider and we have remained open throughout the pandemic. I have continued to work with clients to support them in the community.

We are continuing to see the impacts of COVID-19 across all of our programs. Some of our programs are currently operating at a more than 200 percent increase in services compared to the same month in 2019.

Our programs have been chronically underfunded, and our staff who provide critical services to our community are alarmingly underpaid. We also have fewer services available to support our clients.

I am also United Services' Communications officer and interact with the public daily – even now during a pandemic – as part of my job. I hear from people all the time who tell me what a difference United Services has made in their lives. Here in northeastern Connecticut, we do not have duplication of services. United Services is the only organization providing our critical programs, and we are drastically underfunded – especially considering the important and life-saving work we are doing.

The need for mental health and substance abuse treatment services is expected to grow significantly as we emerge from the pandemic. Now is the time to invest in substantial improvements and enhancements to the behavioral health system, not to time to flat-fund the DMHAS budget.

Please support the \$6.3 million increase in Discharge & Diversion Services. Community nonprofits, such as United Services, help people avoid most costly care (EDs, jails, or shelters) and get them on a path toward recovery. We need these resources to respond to the needs in our community.