



**GILEAD**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC. • Serving Middlesex County**

Improving Lives, Building Futures

Various programs  
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DATE: March 2, 2021

TO: Appropriations Committee, Health Subcommittee

FROM: Daniel Osborne, CEO Gilead Community Services

RE: **H.B.6439 An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 13, 2023**

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Daniel Osborne and I am the CEO of Gilead Community Services in Middletown. Gilead has provided a full continuum of Mental Health & Addiction services in Middlesex County for over 50 years and we have recently expanded to Hartford County.

I sincerely appreciate this opportunity to testify on H.B. 6439, An Act Adjusting The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 13, 2023.

I am testifying tonight on behalf of our 300 amazing staff members, our over 2000 wonderful program participants and the thousands of community members who support and benefit from the services we provide. I am here for one reason and that is to implore you to appropriate \$461 million over the next five years based on the plan that has been outlined by the CT Nonprofit Alliance. It is essential, now more than ever, for us to protect and fully fund the essential services that organizations like Gilead provide to the community!

Reviewing my testimony from last year (and the several years prior), I noticed that I have consistently used the phrase “protect and fully fund” in my testimony year after year. This year, I would like to focus my testimony on what those words mean to me, to the people that work at Gilead and for the people that we serve, especially during a pandemic.

So, first, what do we mean when we ask to be “protected?” I have asked year after year for you to protect us, the nonprofit providers and the thousands of people that we serve. The need for mental health and substance abuse treatment has grown significantly throughout the pandemic and is expected to continue to grow as we emerge from this pandemic. Agencies like Gilead are proud and honored to serve those who come to us in need of treatment and we have skilled and trained professionals ready to respond when called upon. Throughout the pandemic, hundreds of thousands of state residents have depended on the non-profit provider system for essential services that can mean the difference between life and death. And, throughout the pandemic, we have stepped into this need and have met the challenges head on. So, when we ask for you to protect us, what we are really asking for is for you to protect and prioritize your families, your friends, your colleagues and all of the other people that nonprofits serve and save year after year!

Second, I want to share my perspective with you about what it means when we ask to be fully funded. This does not mean flat funding. Over the past 14 years, community nonprofits in Connecticut have lost at least \$461 million in state funding by not keeping pace with inflation or effectively covering increased costs associated with the ever increasing demand for services. Based on the detailed analysis that has been completed by the CT Nonprofit Alliance, we know what we have lost financially. Based on my experience in Connecticut’s nonprofit behavioral healthcare system for over 20 years, I have seen what this has truly cost us. I have seen decreased programming, decreased staffing levels and reduced client capacity in several critical programs while the need for these essential services is clearly on the rise. I have been unable to provide salary increases to my employees that I am desperate to provide and that they deeply deserve. I have seen reductions in client capacity in our programs that serve the most vulnerable in our communities like our ACT Team, our CSP Program and our Rehabilitation Center while the need all around us grows. Ultimately, the true cost is in the years and lives lost to untreated mental health and addiction disorders. This should not be ok with any of us.

So, I urge you today to demonstrate that you are unwilling to allow this to continue!

Please commit to fund the full \$461 million (28% increase) by Fiscal Year 2026!

Please appropriate \$128 million in new funding for community nonprofits in Fiscal Year 22 (7% increase)!

Please index future increases to inflation to ensure that future funding keeps pace with increase costs!

And, finally, please hold nonprofits financially harmless from the impacts of COVID-19!

Some years, I come to you and I am not really sure if our state can do the things that we are asking to be done, but I advocate for them because I know that they need to be done and I am hopeful that we will eventually get there. This year is different. These steps are achievable, we all know that they are. But, it requires that all of you believe that the services that non-profits provide to our communities is of great value and needs to be preserved for future generations and that you act on that belief. Please act on what you know is right!

Respectfully,

Daniel Osborne  
Chief Executive Officer  
Gilead Community Services

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