

**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**  
**THEREFOR**  
John Warga

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

My name is John Warga and I am a registered voter in the City of Bridgeport.

I am here to testify regarding the budget for the next fiscal year 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 since 2008. I went to Bridge House because I had been hospitalized in the inpatient psychiatric unit at Bridgeport Hospital. I have a mental health disorder and I had a really bad alcohol problem. I was placed in a housing program. One of the staff there recommended that I go to Bridge House. I went to Bridge House—and I have come to be made to feel like family. I am not a patient or a client, but treated as an equal—a member of the Clubhouse program.

At Bridge House I can do anything I want to do to be a part of the program. I was taught how to use a computer; I learned how to type a report. I especially enjoy working in the food pantry part of the program.

Bridge House has kept me out of the psychiatric unit at the hospital. Being in the psych unit is more depressing to me than anything else. If there was no Bridge House, I would probably go back to drinking and being depressed again.

Please consider increasing the funding for mental health services—or even increase the funding, so that places like Bridge House can stay open—and I can stay out of the hospital!

Thank you very much for listening to my story.