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United for Quality Care

March 3, 2021  
Katherine Jones-Newton, Consumer  
New Haven  
SEIU District 1199 New England  
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee. My name is Katherine Jones-Newton and I am a Consumer in the Medicaid waiver program that lives in New Haven. In 2012, I broke my hip in a bad car accident and my mobility has been limited ever since. I have been able to stay in my home and live as much of a normal life as I possible thanks to the help of home care workers who are paid by Allied Community Resources. I am here today to testify in support of cancelling the state's contract with Allied.

Being able to receive services in my own home has had a great impact on my quality of life. After being in a facility for 6 months, I know the difference that it makes to be able to be in my home where I feel secure, comfortable and happy. My home care workers help me in every part of my life; they help me move, take a shower, make sure I take my medication, get my groceries, clean my house and a million other small things that I might need throughout the day. They also become my friends and they support me in my times of need and I do the same for them.

Allied has paid my homecare workers for the past 8 years, and I have seen the problems with Allied increasingly get worse. Last year, for example, I faxed the timesheets to Allied and kept the fax confirmation sheet. However, on the day before payday, Allied called to tell me that they couldn't find the timesheets for one of my workers. That worker then had to re-fax them herself – which cost her \$6 – and she STILL didn't get paid on payday. Instead, she had wait over a week to get paid. My homecare worker had to go around borrowing money to cover her bills plus the late fees she incurred on top of them. In fact, \*I\* had to lend her money to get her through!

During another pay period, we had an additional problem. When I called Allied, they told me that both my PCAs would get paid. Then, I got an automated text saying there was a problem, and when I called they told me that my two PCAs had an hours' overlap. Except they were wrong: there was no overlap, and my PCAs' timesheets were filled out correctly. However, it didn't matter: they still held one entire week of pay for one of my PCAs. Because the time had been correct to start with, I simply submitted another timesheet showing the same exact hours with an "R" on the top, and they paid her a week late. She was so frustrated she wanted to quit, and I don't blame her.

I have taken a lot of time and effort in finding my PCAs, training them, and building trust and rapport. In turn, my PCAs make me feel secure, comfortable, and happy in my home. But they can't be secure, comfortable and happy if they can't pay their bills and support their families, and I do not want to lose them over someone else's staggering incompetence. Our homecare workers work hard – and they deserve better. Thank you for your time.