



March 6, 2021

Appropriations Committee Human Services Public Hearing Testimony

Julie Peters, Executive Director, Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut

Chairpersons and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Julie Peters, Executive Director at the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut. I am submitting this testimony in regard to THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS. In his proposal, the Governor seeks to maintain level funding for the Services for Persons with Disabilities line which includes funding for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut. We applaud his decision not to cut this line, as BIAC **has sustained a 40% cut since 2017 in this line.**

As BIAC commemorates 39 years serving Connecticut residents, we acknowledge the small operating grant we receive from the Department of Social Services to provide entirely free resources and supports which the State is unable to provide. There is no other organization or state agency in Connecticut which provides the full range of brain injury support and education that BIAC offers.

The past year has been very challenging for all Americans. For nonprofits, it has been a year of managing crisis; trying to deliver services through a pandemic as the ability to raise funds for those services has been significantly diminished. However, the need for our services has not lessened, and actually has grown as agencies have ceased offering brain injury services.

The Department of Social Services contracts with BIAC to provide services required as part of the Medicaid ABI Waiver program. The contract with BIAC is used as evidence in five sections of the Waiver application showing that DSS is meeting the obligations of this federal program. BIAC is also the only organization approved to provide advanced training for case managers.

No one else does what BIAC does, including the Department of Social Services (DSS), which is why DSS contracts with BIAC to provide the many essential services that it is not equipped to offer. BIAC meets the needs of the State's brain injury survivors on behalf of DSS as efficiently as it does effectively.

- BIAC provides all services at a fraction of what it would cost DSS to provide these services.
- BIAC's work on behalf of DSS reduces the brain injury-related workload at DSS.
- BIAC provides critical training and consultation to most of the State key agencies- including DSS, VA, DCF, DPH, DOE, DOC, DMHAS, DDS, and BRS.

Despite amazing advances, the medical community is not able to restore "life as they knew it" to those who survive or to their loved ones. Even BIAC cannot to do that — but we **CAN** and **DO** provide brain injury survivors and their families with the ongoing support and resources needed to optimize recovery, and that makes BIAC a genuinely critical lifeline on what is always a very long and difficult journey back.

With BIAC the State's *de facto* resource for brain injury services, BIAC's operating grant significantly impacts the delivery of services and supports we are able to offer, including those required under the ABI Medicaid Waiver, to thousands of Connecticut residents and the ever-increasing number of returning veterans whose lives have been shattered by the experience of brain injury.

We appreciate and are thankful for your support in the past and hope that you will continue to support our mission by committing to funding for the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut. Thank you for your time.

Julie Peters, CBIS

Middletown, CT

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