

**Appropriations Committee
Human Services Subcommittee Public Hearing
Wednesday, March 3, 10:00 am**

**H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023,
And Making Appropriations Therefor.**

Good evening madam chair and members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Roe, and I am the manager of adult outpatient services with United Services, Inc. at our Dayville site. This site serves a wide variety of adult clients, often chronically mentally ill, and the team of clinicians in Dayville provides individual and group therapy to people seeking relief from mental illness. I am a social worker by trade and in my current role I support and oversee staff that are struggling with the weight of the increased need for services in our community.

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. 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, finding unique ways to serve our clients while keeping them and our staff healthy and safe.

We are continuing to see the impacts of COVID-19 across all of our programs, with some currently operating at a more than 200 percent increase compared to the same month in 2019. This is especially challenging given the significant increase in acuity with our clients.

Our programs have been chronically underfunded, and our staff who provide critical service to our community are alarmingly underpaid, while being expected to provide the same level of service with fewer resources. Part of the difficulty is needing greater funding to attract and retain professional staff who often find for-profit jobs more financially stable despite the desire to work in the non-profit arena. This also impacts our clients who experience delays in their own progress by chronic turnover with their providers.

We are concerned that the Governor's budget appears to use the FMAP bump received by the federal government to enhance Medicaid rates into the general fund, rather than increasing rates for Medicaid providers. We need rate increases to cover increased cost in order to respond to the needs in our community so we can support the betterment of those most at risk from chronic and debilitating mental illness and substance use issues.

Thank you for letting me speak today.