

TESTIMONY
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
March 3, 2021

Governor's Proposed FY 2022-2023 Budget for Human Services

Yale New Haven Health, Connecticut's largest provider of inpatient acute psychiatric care to children, provides high quality care to our most vulnerable children and adolescents through care provided in the Emergency Departments, and both inpatient and outpatients settings at Bridgeport, Greenwich, Lawrence & Memorial and Yale New Haven Hospitals. We work closely with our colleagues at Beacon Health Options, and the Departments of Children and Families and Social Services to advocate for the correct level of care in the appropriate setting.

Emergency departments at Yale New Haven Health System hospital affiliates (and across the state and country) are filled with children in crisis who are brought to us by caregivers for psychiatric evaluations. In many cases, these children are cleared for discharge, though are unable to return home due to a variety of circumstances. This results in the children remaining in our emergency departments until an alternative arrangement is developed and secured, which takes days, and in many cases, weeks. Some children who come to our emergency departments require an inpatient admission for acute psychiatric care, and they too, reside in the medical emergency departments until an inpatient bed becomes available. Others, may need psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF) care, which is scarce in Connecticut. The budget before you proposes to close the 8 bed unit at Solnit North that serves adolescent boys (a PRTF.) CT Children's Place, Solnit South, has been closed to new admissions for months. We have not had much success in referring adolescent boys, or girls due to extended wait lists. Most recently, we were advised about a 45 day wait for a bed at Solnit South for a female teen who remains inpatient at Yale New Haven Hospital.

Children are lingering in our emergency, inpatient medical and inpatient acute psychiatric settings waiting for an appropriate placement. While writing this testimony, there are 7 children "stuck" in Yale New Haven Children's Hospital's Emergency Department waiting for an inpatient bed. Two teens are stuck in our children's psychiatric unit, awaiting residential care. One has been with us for nearly three months, the other for >6 weeks. This indicates a shortage of residential psychiatric services for children, and we can ill afford to eliminate PRTF beds at this time.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.