-TESTIMONY TEMPLATE -

**Governor’s Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments**

**Appropriations Hearing**

**HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023**

**Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services**

**Thursday, February 24th, 2022**

**[Name]**

**[Title]**

**[Organization]**

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is [your name] and I am a registered voter in [your town].

I am here to testify in regards to [or strong opposition to; or share my grave concerns; or something similar] the proposed budget for DMHAS.

Briefly share **YOUR STORY** about how services/supports/housing etc. have supported you or a loved one or people you care about on the path of recovery and living a life of quality and purpose, or alternatively what would have supported such a path!  Use props if you’d like—a picture of the person whose situation you are testifying about or number of prescription bottles, etc.  Helps legislators to visualize.

In that light I would like to commend Governor Lamont for:

Say what you like in this budget. Only focus on what’s most important to you when referring to the list provided on the second sheet. Connect it back to your story and why these services matter to you.

However, there are things that Governor Lamont’s proposed budget does not address that are of concern to me:

(Only focus on the ones important to you when referring to the list provided on the second sheet. Feel free to *be a storyteller* – paint a picture of what cuts and reductions to services/supports/housing is/was/would be like for you or your loved one – the real-life impact and trauma of it all etc., and/or the negative fiscal impacts of cutting proven and effective community-based services, resulting in higher use of high-end/high-cost services)

[sum up your position again at the end]

Thank you for this opportunity to speak and share my (lived) experience with you about what this would mean to me/my loved one/people I care about!

**Talking Points: Use these to help tie your story back to what’s in the budget, and call attention to what’s not.**

What you’d like the Governor to focus on that’s important to you and your story:

(You don’t have to list all of these – focus on the ones important to you and your story):

* Preserving the allocation for Supportive Housing Services – along with investment in the Department of Housing budget for 350 units of additional affordable housing and $2.8 million to fund supportive housing services).

If housing has been an issue for you, use your story to say why this is important.

* Providing $2.5 million in Additional resources for Diversion and Discharge Services.

If you or a loved one has experienced hospitalization at CVH – or is currently there waiting for discharge – use your story to say why this is important.

* Preserving the allocation for young adult services.

If you are or have been a young adult affected by these services, use your story to say why this is important. Or, if you think the current allocation is not enough, you can say that too.

* Providing $11.7 million in additional resources for Substance Abuse Services

If you have benefitted from or need Substance Abuse Services, use you story to say why this is important to you

* Providing $4.6 million in additional resources to expand and improve Mobile Crisis Services.

If crisis response has been an issue for you, use your story to say why this is important – and what the improvements need to look like

* Providing $1.4 million in additional resources for respite bed services for people coming out of or being diverted from incarceration

If this has been an issue for you or your loved one, use your story to say why this is important – and what the improvements need to look like

* Providing $1.2 million in new resources to provide mental health peer supports in hospital emergency departments.

If you have gone or been sent to a hospital emergency department for mental health concerns, use your story to tell how your stay could have been improved with the assistance of peer support

* Preserves funding for DMHAS Legal Services (CLRP).

If you have ever had to call Connecticut Legal Rights Project for assistance, and they’ve helped you get out of a DMHAS hospital, keep your housing, or obtain Social Security benefits, etc., use your story to support funding DMHAS Legal Services. Include as many details of your story as you feel comfortable.

**What the proposed budget does not address:**

* This is a year where we **need** **more**. The existing budget already underfunds mental health services and this budget does nothing to improve that situation. We need better than the status quo as we emerge from this pandemic.

If you agree, consider asking legislators for more funding to the services you care about.

* The proposed budget does not address the underfunding of community non-profits

If you have benefitted from or in need of services from an agency in your community for supportive housing, case management, employment, clinical services, peer support, clubhouse, etc., use your story to say why the lack of funding has affected you or your loved ones.

* The proposed budget does not address the lack of peer-run respite options for people with mental health crises.

If this is important to you, or if you want to make a case for peer run respite, use your story to ask legislators to fund peer run respite. We have a one-pager explaining what peer run respites are and why they are necessary, feel free to contact Jordan at jfairchild\_ktp@cahs.org if you’d like to attach it to your written testimony. You can always attach fact sheets and extra resources like this to the end of your written testimony.

* No increase in state funding for mental health (compared to significant increase in funding for substance abuse services and in light of an acknowledgement that we are experiencing a mental health crisis for both children and adults)

If this is important to you or your loved one, use your story to say why

* Much of the money in this budget is coming from the American Rescue Plan Act, which is **temporary funding**. What is the long-term plan for when the federal funding runs out? Are these valuable programs something that we are going to put in place for only two years and then lose when ARPA funds are no longer available? Legislators must ensure long term funding for these programs.