



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 16, 2008

Contact: Terry Edelstein
860-573-8188
tedelstein@ccpa-inc.org

SURVEY SHOWS IMPACT OF STATE BUDGET ON COMMUNITY PROVIDER CLIENTS

One-third cutting staff, others reduce service, cut programs

A survey of members, by the Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA), shows many providers of human services in Connecticut are taking drastic steps to keep their budgets balanced and to continue delivering services to clients in need.

The difficult budget situation faced by many providers is a direct result of the decision by Governor M. Jodi Rell and Democratic legislative leaders to make no changes to the state budget in the current fiscal year. The real world result of that decision means providers are serving clients with mental health challenges and developmental disabilities, without adequate funding to cover the rising cost of services.

The survey results paint a troubling picture - just as a worsening economy puts greater demand on the system. More than 500,000 state residents are served by community providers on an annual basis. Nearly all will see some impact, because of the failure to adequately fund the agencies they rely on.

According to the survey, many provider agencies are attempting to balance their budgets by reducing personnel costs. At least 63% are leaving open positions vacant, or delaying new hires and 33% are eliminating positions. This decision, while prudent, has a direct impact on client care in an environment that often demands 24/7 manpower coverage and very high staff to client ratios.

Providers are also reducing training and employee benefits. Forty-eight percent are cutting training and staff development, 56% are increasing employee health insurance contribution requirements and 19% are reducing other employee benefits. Both the reduction in training and employee benefit changes will eventually directly impact quality of care by destabilizing the workforce.

“We advocated strongly during the last legislative session for a Community Provider Rescue Fund that would have addressed the growing crisis in this sector of Connecticut’s healthcare

CCPA

35 Cold Springs Rd., Suite 522, Rocky Hill, CT 06067-3165
(P)860-257-7909 • (F)860-257-7777
www.ccpa-inc.org

system. This course of action is now having a very real and dangerous effect on the lives of the people we serve,” said Terry Edelstein, President/ CEO of CCPA.

“We have no choice but to continue to advocate for proper funding for these essential services. We are asking the governor and legislative leaders to address this worsening situation before it develops into a full blown crisis. If a special session on the budget is called before the end of the year, we would hope the plight of our clients would be at the top of the agenda. This is more than a political problem, it is a very real quality of life issue for thousands of Connecticut residents and families.”

The CCPA member survey also indicates 59% of responding providers are delaying building repairs and improvements, while another 56% are delaying plans to fix or upgrade technological and medical equipment.

The state of Connecticut relies on the community provider system to deliver healthcare and human services to individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance use disorders, among other significant challenges. For the past twenty years, the provider system has been habitually under-funded, with budget increases failing to keep pace with growth in the Consumer Price Index and several other important market indicators.

CCPA will continue to monitor the impact of inadequate funding on client services and will continue to advocate in favor of proper funding on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of people served by the system.

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Attachments:

1. [Steps Taken to Deal With 0% Cost of Services Adjustment \(COSA\)](#)
2. [Consumer Price Index and Medical Consumer Price Index vs. Cost of Services Adjustment \(COSA\) – 1987-2008](#)