



March 12, 2008

CCPA Testimony: GAE Committee

**S. B. No. 678 (RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES STRATEGY BOARD.**

I am Terry Edelstein, President/CEO of the Connecticut Community Providers Association. CCPA advocates on behalf of organizations that provide services and supports for people with disabilities and significant needs including children and adults with substance use disorders, mental illness, developmental, and physical disabilities.

I'm pleased to speak in support of S. B. No. 678 (RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES STRATEGY BOARD.

CCPA has been a long time proponent of the need to address the funding shortfalls that community providers experience on a daily basis. For over twenty years, private provider funding has not matched the CPI, with the gap increasing every year. While the CPI has increased by 88%, payments to private providers under contract with the state have increased by less than 28%. Payments to community providers are not sufficient to cover the "Cost of Services."

This year we began to advocate for the **Community Provider Rescue Fund**, a three part strategy to provide:

- ◆ An immediate infusion of \$135 million to stabilize the system, correct funding shortfalls in the previous two years and projected flat funding for the next fiscal year.
- ◆ The formation of a Commission consisting of industry representatives, administration officials and healthcare experts to consider a long term indexing solution.
- ◆ Creation of a capital improvement fund for community providers to be maintained on an annual level at \$65 million.

**CCPA**

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

**We appreciate the commitment of this Committee to consider the creation of a “Health and Human Services Strategy Board” as outlined in SB 678.** This Board will go hand in hand with recommendations for an immediate infusion of funds (under the purview of the Appropriations Committee) and the creation of a capitol improvement fund (under the auspices of the Finance Committee). A “Health and Human Services Strategy Board” on its own won’t solve the systemic crisis, but it will pave a direction for achieving a solution.

### **Jurisdiction of the Strategy Board**

I’d like to review some technical suggestions for modifying the bill to better clarify which entities are covered. The targeted service providers have been called **“private providers”** in state budget funding lines, **“community providers”** in SB 413 *AN ACT ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY PROVIDER RESCUE FUND ACCOUNT AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES COMMISSION*, now before the Human Services Committee, and **“Purchase of Service” (POS) contractors** via the POS unit at OPM.

We would like to be sure that the organizations covered by the Strategy Board are one and the same as the POS providers. Giving the Strategy Board jurisdiction over “state funded, community-based health and human services” is a very broad categorization that might be seen as including general hospital, home health agencies and nursing homes, among other entities. **Instead we ask that you consider the jurisdiction of the Strategy Board to cover “Purchase of Service” contractors.** The state agencies covered by POS are: DDS, DMHAS, DCF, DSS (grants), DPH, Correction, Judicial, and the Children’s Trust Fund.

### **Timelines for Strategy Board Action**

The Strategy Board is to be convened by October 1, 2008 with a reporting date no later than January 1, 2009. **We urge you to consider a shorter timeframe for convening the Board and a shorter window for the Board’s reporting.** A major task of the Strategy Board is to make budget and funding recommendations. But extending this report due date until January 1, 2009 means that the opportunity of making a case for funding in the Governor’s budget submission is long past. We see this Strategy Board as being able to influence both the Executive and the Legislative branches in advance of budget development.

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We suggest that the timeline for Board action be changed as follows:

June 1, 2008	Appointments made
July 1, 2008	Board convened
October 1, 2008	Board reports to Governor and Legislative Committees of cognizance

Recommended amendment:

29 (b) All initial appointments to the board shall be made not later than  
30 JUNE 1, 2008.

Deleted: August

33 shall each serve as cochairpersons of such board. Such cochairpersons  
34 shall convene the first meeting of the board not later than JULY 1,  
35 2008.

Deleted: October

71 (f) Not later than OCTOBER 1, and each OCTOBER first thereafter,

Deleted: January 1, 2009

Deleted: January

**Funding for the Strategy Board**

We recommend that the sum of \$200,000 be included in the bill for use by the Strategy Board for its comprehensive data generation and research tasks. Without such an appropriation, the Strategy Board will be relying on the voluntary efforts of the state agencies or the Board members and cannot possibly complete its tasks comprehensively.

Recommended amendment:

THE SUM OF TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS IS APPROPRIATED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES, FROM THE GENERAL FUND, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2009, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FUNDS FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PURCHASE OF SERVICE STRATEGY BOARD.

Thank you for your consideration of these technical suggestions. We look forward to working with the Committee in the implementation stages.