



August 12, 2009

Senator Donald Williams
Senate President Pro Tempore
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Senator Williams:

As community providers supporting individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance use disorders, we are writing to warn you about the consequences of the current state budget situation.

Community based providers rely heavily on state funding. With great effort, most have managed to get through July and August with reduced funding as budget negotiations continue. As we approach September, it will become more difficult for providers to offer the same level care without proper funding. It is impossible to maintain normal operations when our state spending allotments are being set by Executive Order, at random and without advance notice. We do not operate with large cash reserves. Most community providers are non profit, which means we are very susceptible to the arbitrary fluctuations in state funding being created by the current absence of a budget agreement.

At the end of July, community providers were given one day notice that funding would be cut by as much as 20% during the month of August for certain vital programs. No business can operate effectively under such circumstances.

We recognize the difficulty of running state government without a budget in place, but we ask you to please understand that these seemingly random decisions, made in an effort to keep state government operating, have a direct real life effect on clients with significant healthcare needs. At this point, we have no choice but to advocate on behalf of our clients by requesting that state funding be restored to last year's levels and that we receive advance warning of any cuts contemplated as the fiscal year progresses.

Over the past several years we have shown that the community provider system has been chronically under funded by state government despite the fact that government is turning increasingly to us for help. As the budget process continues, we ask that you make the well-being of our clients, your constituents, a top priority and consider our services as part of the long term solution to the state's healthcare needs and fiscal challenges.

CCPA

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Impact of State Budget Situation on Community Providers

We are also contacting the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the commissioners of the departments of Social Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Developmental Disabilities and Children and Families to request an emergency meeting to discuss the current budget crisis and how it is impacting healthcare for our clients. It is important for you to know that providers are receiving mixed signals from OPM and other line agencies in state government, about how the current funding crisis will be managed as we move forward. This inconsistency in funding and guidance ultimately impacts client care.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Goduti
Vice President for Public Policy