



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

NED LAMONT
GOVERNOR

MIRIAM E. DELPHIN-RITTMON, Ph.D.
COMMISSIONER

Testimony by Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, PhD, Commissioner
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Before the Appropriations and Public Health Committees
September 21, 2020
2021 SAPT Block Grant Hearing

Good afternoon Senators Osten and Abrams; Representatives Walker and Steinberg; and other distinguished members of the Appropriations and Public Health Committees. I am Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). I am here before you today to present the federal fiscal year (FFY) Allocation Plan for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant.

The Allocation Plan before you is based on the President's proposed budget of \$18,210,248 which reflects a \$2,961 decrease from the FFY20 final amount. The amount is subject to change when the final appropriation is authorized. The SAPT Block Grant represents only a portion of DMHAS' spending for substance use prevention and treatment services. Most of the programs which are funded with federal Block Grant dollars also receive state funding. The state funding component is not reflected in the plan before you today.

Block Grant funded activities include substance use prevention, education, and multiple treatment modalities. Twenty percent of the total SAPT Block Grant is designated for prevention activities, as required by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

DMHAS continues its close focus on efforts related to addressing the opioid crisis, even amidst the unprecedented COVID19 pandemic which has presented challenges at all levels of care. DMHAS has, for example, modified services to accommodate social distancing demands. With guidance from the federal government, DMHAS has allowed increased flexibility in clients' ability to become eligible for "take-home" doses of methadone, provided personal protective equipment where needed, and assisted shelters in management of diverted homeless persons with behavioral health needs.

A number of federal discretionary grant awards have augmented Block Grant dollars used to respond to the opioid crisis. These dollars include a DMHAS administered Crisis Counseling Program grant for the provision of community outreach, support, psychological first aid, and resource linkage services to individuals affected by COVID19. Beyond discretionary grants, the SAPT Block Grant assists in these efforts by supporting residential detoxification; intensive, intermediate, and long-term residential care; outpatient treatment; and opioid replacement therapy. A variety of community support services that support recovery from opioid addiction are also funded including case management, vocational rehabilitation, transportation, and outreach to specific populations in need of treatment.

DMHAS strives for stable funding of its continuum of prevention, treatment and recovery services. This year's allocation plan remains the same as last year's plan. The small decrease in proposed funding has been covered by carry forward funds, allowing for stable funding.

DMHAS is aggressively moving forward to ensure that the resources available to address the service needs of our citizens are used wisely. This FFY2021 SAPT Block Grant Allocation Plan is an important component of reaching our goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant Allocation Plan. I would be happy to take any questions you may have at this time.