



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

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Testimony by Nancy Navarretta, MA, LPC, NCC, Commissioner
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Before the General Obligation Bonding Subcommittee on
March 27, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Moore, Representative Napoli and distinguished members of the General Obligation Bonding Subcommittee. I am Commissioner Nancy Navarretta of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). I am joined by Cheryl Arora, the Department's Chief Financial Officer, and Steven Hecimovich, the Department's Director of Engineering Services. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on prior bond authorizations and the Governor's proposed budget for SFY 24 and SFY 25. The Governor's budget recommends new DMHAS authorizations in the amount of \$48,540,000 in SFY 24 and \$30,990,000 in SFY 25.

DMHAS is a large healthcare service provider which delivers cost-effective, quality substance use disorder and mental health treatment and recovery services. Bonding resources are used to upgrade and maintain DMHAS' aging hospitals and treatment facilities. DMHAS' older facilities include the Connecticut Mental Health Center in New Haven, built in 1966; the Capitol Region Mental Health Center in Hartford's north end, built in 1954; the Greater Bridgeport Mental Health Center built in 1972; Whiting Forensic Hospital (WFH) built in 1970; and the main patient care buildings at Connecticut Valley Hospital (CVH) which date from 1940 to 1959.

The Governor's proposed new bond authorization for SFYs 24/25 will provide the additional funding needed for the construction of a sprinkler project at Southwest Connecticut Mental Health System, a state-operated DMHAS facility in Bridgeport. Additionally, the authorizations support improvements and maintenance of physical plants of DMHAS-operated hospitals and clinics statewide including: upgrades to inpatient units which will enhance treatment settings and living quarter, repair or replacement of roofs, windows, elevators, electrical, fire alarm systems and other life-safety issues.

DMHAS has a total of \$24,758,678 in unallocated balances from previous authorizations. The Department's plans for unallocated funds is as follows:

- Design and installation of sprinkler systems in direct care patient buildings (\$6,919,500) -design and construction of the sprinkler project at Southwest Connecticut Mental Health System in Bridgeport (outpatient and hospital services).
- Fire, Safety and Environmental Improvements (\$12,056,179)-multiple projects including:
 - Design and fees to renovate inpatient units at CVH's Battell Hall

- Replacement of the freight elevator at Merritt Hall, a CVH inpatient services building
- Replacement of a generator at Dutcher Hall, a WFH inpatient services building
- Design and construction of multiple roofing projects
- New fire alarm systems in multiple buildings
- Replacement of HVAC units
- A study which plans for the replacement of Whiting Forensic Hospital (\$2,500,000)- Vendor procurement to complete the study is in progress, with current bids under review.

Additionally, the Department has \$3,282,999 million in prior bond authorizations for Grants-in-Aid to Private Non Profit Providers for purchases, repairs, alterations, and improvements at community based residential and outpatient facilities. The Department anticipates utilizing this balance over the next biennium to fund infrastructure needs in the private provider system. Approximately \$160,000 of this balance is authorized by the State Bond Commission as emergency funds to assist these private non-profit providers with projects that address urgent health and life-safety issues.

We appreciate the opportunity to address the Subcommittee today on these matters, and we would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.