



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

M. Jodi Rell
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN
Commissioner

Testimony by Doreen Del Bianco
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Before the Task Force To Study Converting Legislative Documents
From Paper to Electronic Form
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Good afternoon Sen. Crisco, Ms. Henry and distinguished members of the Task Force. My name is Doreen Del Bianco and I am the Legislative Program Manager for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

I am speaking today not only on behalf of myself but also for individuals that are a part of the DMHAS system of care and are active participants in the legislative process.

When I conduct legislative trainings for individuals in the DMHAS system, I always talk about public hearings and how it is important to grab people's attention. I usually suggest that they use props to make their point if possible. These are my props laptops, extension cords, reams of paper, printers, plug extenders, and of course, a wagon to carry it all. These are the new tools that legislative liaisons and others will need in order to have equal access to information at the Capitol.

While I can, to some degree, negotiate with my employer for some of these tools, people with very little means cannot. If someone served by DMHAS wants information that is currently available to them in the Bill Room where would they go to get it once the Legislative Branch goes paperless? These individuals do not have the resources necessary to print a bill or file copy in their public library. In order to talk to legislators about a specific bill, having a copy in your hand to reference a section or particular language is extremely helpful.

My suggestions are as follows:

More electric outlets! Not only in hearing rooms and the cafeteria and the lobbies on the 2nd and 3rd floor but also in the Capitol Building. The executive branch legislative liaisons use room 410 for our place to work during session. We have two electric outlets in that room and 25 people needing to plug in their laptop or phone charger. We use extenders but the plugs are on one side of the room and so we run them across the floor which is a worker's comp claim waiting to happen. The Senate and House galleries have similar wiring issues.

Access to printers for the public. I can come into my office on Capitol Ave early in the morning to print the documents that I need but what will people do who have no access to printers? Not only are the printers necessary but there may also be a need for some technical assistance to make sure private citizens are getting what they need to act on their issue.

Summing it up, I support the recommendations made to this task force by the CT Lobbying Association. Their suggestions would continue to afford easy access to important information to a variety of CT citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to your task force today on these suggestions. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.