

Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council

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Co-Chairs: Rep. Phil Miller, Sharon Langer & Hal Gibber

January 20, 2015

Secretary Benjamin Barnes
Office of Policy and Management
State of Connecticut
450 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Medicaid Behavioral Health Rates for Children and Adults

Dear Secretary Barnes,

We are writing to you today with great urgency related to the lack of progress on the Medicaid rate increases for behavioral health services. As you know, the Connecticut Behavioral Health Oversight Council has long played a role in the oversight of the Behavioral Health Partnership, a highly successful partnership among the Departments of Social Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Children and Families. One of our statutory roles is to review proposed changes to Medicaid rates affecting behavioral health and to make recommendations to DSS regarding the impact of the rates on access to services. However, DSS has not fulfilled its statutory obligation to present the rates to the Council for review. As a result, we are writing to express our concern about the delay in the distribution of funding appropriated, effective July 1, 2014.

The legislature authorized the appropriation to offset reductions in funding to DMHAS grant accounts for programs affected by the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. DSS reported to the Oversight Council meeting on Wednesday January 14, 2015 that because the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has not yet approved the State Plan Amendment that was submitted to approve rates *effective in 2012*, DSS cannot submit a subsequent State Plan Amendment for the rate increases to take effect July 1, 2014.

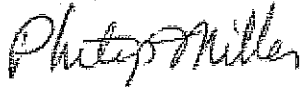
The situation is urgent because a portion of the DMHAS grant cuts – cuts that were predicated on enhanced Medicaid rates for adult services, are now being implemented. Delay of implementation of enhanced rates has the consequence of reduced services and access for adults struggling with mental illness and the adverse effects of substance abuse. Children and families are negatively impacted when the adult caregiver cannot access needed services, often resulting in the removal of the child from the

home. The combined effect of cuts to grant programs and inadequate Medicaid rates will result in increased costs to the health care delivery system through the use of emergency rooms and unnecessary hospitalizations.

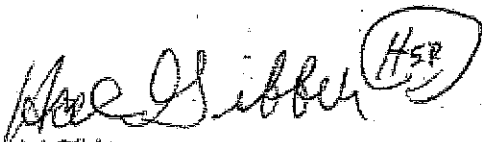
On behalf of the entire Council, we are asking that the grant cuts be reversed pending resolution of the Medicaid rate increase at the federal level.

We look forward to working with your office and the Partnership agencies to resolve this matter as quickly as possible.

Very Sincerely Yours,



Representative Philip Miller
Co-Chair



Hal Gibber
Co-Chair



Sharon D. Langer, MEd, JD
Co-Chair

C: Under Secretary Anne Foley, OPM
Commissioner Roderick Bremby, DSS
Commissioner Patricia Rehmer, DMHAS
Commissioner Joette Katz, DCF
William Halsey, DSS
Colleen Harrington, DMHAS
Karen Andersson, DCF