

Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Denis Geary. I am the executive director of the Jewish Association for Community Living in Hartford. JCL is a member of the CT Association of Nonprofits and I serve on their board of directors.

On behalf of non-profit providers of human services programming throughout the state of Connecticut, our clients, their families and our thousands of dedicated employees, thank you for your time today and thank you for what we hope will be a positive, game-changing approach to the long-term strategies so badly needed to strengthen the foundation of our service delivery system.

As the executive director of a programmatically successful but financially challenged DDS funded provider, I am here to share with you what we have done to help our elected leaders manage this financial crisis and to provide cost-effective services to those who can't survive without assistance.

For the life of our agency- almost 30 years- we have been engaged in a purchasing collaboration with a much larger agency. We purchase back office services that include business office functions, office space, human resources support, IT set up and support, shared in-service training for employees, and more. For an amount of money far less than it would have cost my agency, we purchase these services. Perhaps this type of arrangement can be modeled on a larger scale.

More recently, with the impact of the worldwide economic crisis hitting hard and with no COLA from the state for two consecutive fiscal years, we have endeavored to strike the financial balance needed to get by. We have modified our employee health insurance plan, passing along increased out-of-pocket expenses to our employees. We plan to modify our retirement plan by July 1, further reducing our offering to our employees. We converted a garage in one of our group homes so we could add a resident from the waiting list and utilize the modest funding he came with. Of course, we took on added staffing expense too. We are working hard to increase fundraising. We have joined an electricity purchasing consortium. And finally, we have frozen salaries, our biggest cost center, since 2007. No Wall Street, or even Main Street style bonuses at my agency. All of this is intended to dodge the most damaging of options- cutting back on our staffing ratios, the inevitable next step if relief doesn't come soon.

Nonprofits don't create the need for services. But we do provide cost-effective solutions, treatments, and programming support. This not only benefits those we directly serve, but it benefits all the citizens of our state. Our state needs us as much as we need you. Thank you.