

#PeopleMatter

October 21, 2015

The Honorable Dannel P. Malloy, Governor
The Honorable J. Brendan Sharkey, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Martin M. Looney, Senate President Pro Tempore
The Honorable Joe Aresimowicz, House Majority Leader
The Honorable Bob Duff, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Themis Klarides, House Republican Leader
The Honorable Len Fasano, Senate Minority Leader

Dear Governor Malloy, Speaker Sharkey, Senator Looney, Representative Aresimowicz, Senator Duff, Representative Klarides, Senator Fasano:

We urge you to make nonprofit community providers a top priority in the upcoming bipartisan meetings to address revenue shortfalls. Supporting the nonprofit health and human service system must be a key principle because it provides critical aid to our most vulnerable citizens, while also drives economic activity and employment. The nonprofit sector employs 12% of Connecticut's workforce, supports 15% of the state's population and delivers over 70% of the services to Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens. After decades of underfunding and eight years with rising costs and virtually no funding increases, any cuts to this system will mean more layoffs and service reductions, further hampering our fragile economy. However, if properly supported, nonprofit organizations offer a real solution to addressing Connecticut's short and long-term economic woes. We look forward to being part of the budget discussions.

The #People Matter Coalition came together during the last legislative session in response to the serious threat to the health and human services safety net proposed in the state budget. The Coalition consists of advocates, individuals who benefit from services, human service employees, and providers throughout Connecticut. It is on their behalf that we express deep concern regarding possible additional cuts, following an already devastating round of rescissions on September 18, 2015, affecting the nonprofit health and human service system.

The state has underfunded our indispensable community human service providers for decades. With more than 20 years of chronic underfunding and no significant cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) in the past 8 years, nonprofit businesses, like their corporate counterparts, are forced to downsize, implement layoffs, reduce benefits and close essential community based programs. Reduced funding to the nonprofit community negatively impacts the quality of, and access to, essential health and human services, education, and employment outcomes, which hurt both individuals who benefit from services and the state as a whole by placing undue stress on families and driving people to higher cost services such as hospital emergency departments and institutional settings.

When funding for health and human services is continually targeted for budget cuts, a profoundly negative ripple effect is felt across the state, in local communities and among individuals and families, and those employed in the industry. We urge you to give a higher priority to essential programs and services that generate jobs and economic activity while also maintaining the highest quality of life for our communities and for our families.

There are viable alternatives to cutting human service programs, while promoting a fiscally responsible state budget. We offer to be a partner with state government to develop policy solutions that will maximize state investment, enhance revenue potential from federal and private sources, and strengthen

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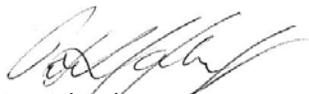
community impact. We need only point to the Governor's Second Chance Society initiative for a forward-thinking policy that will reap long-time benefits to the state. We laud the Governor's leadership to rightfully recognize that successful re-entry into society is a moral obligation of our state. However, critical community support services for these individuals were cut in the September rescissions, jeopardizing the initiative's potential success. This is just one example of the negative ripple effect that hurts communities and families, and undermines the state's own plans.

Supporting Connecticut's nonprofit health and human service providers can create a positive economic ripple effect described in the report: ["Why The State of Connecticut Must Adequately Fund Nonprofit Providers: A Blueprint for Increasing Quality of Life and Economic Growth"](#). Nonprofits are businesses and significant economic drivers. They own property, purchase goods and services, and provide critical programs and services. Services provided by nonprofits employ middle class people, help people find jobs, support their families and contribute to the state's economy. Employers, employees and clients alike purchase food, pay utilities, lease property, all benefiting the local economy. Individuals supported by nonprofits are able to find health and hope, are less reliant on institutional systems and crisis services and are safe so that their family members can continue to work.

The Governor's Cabinet on Nonprofit Health and Human Services endorsed *The Partnership Principles for a Sustainable Human Service System* (The Donors Forum), in each of the last three years, identifying the shared commitment to partnership to support a strong human service system. As the Principles state, *"The hallmark of a strong human services system is that residents and communities can access high-quality services that meet their needs."* Human services not only improve the quality of life for individuals who benefit from services, but in doing so contribute to the vitality of communities and the State.

Nonprofit community human service providers are a key part of the solution to the state's current fiscal crisis. We urge you to find alternatives to these rescissions harming community human services and, especially during the budget adjustment process, to support the state's expansive nonprofit system as a way to grow the economy, improve employment rates and provide essential services that are vital to the health and stability of our economy.

Sincerely,



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cc: The Honorable Ben Barnes, Secretary, Office of Policy and Management
The Connecticut State Senate
The Connecticut House of Representatives

The #PeopleMatter Coalition is a Cross-Sector alliance of community human service providers & the individuals and families they serve. Members include: AIDS Connecticut, The Arc Connecticut / Families for Families, Connecticut Association of Nonprofits, Connecticut Community Providers Association, Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies, Connecticut Nonprofit Human Services Alliance, CT Alliance for Basic Human Needs, HARC, Inc., NAMI Connecticut, Oak Hill, Our Families Can't Wait, and 1199NE/SEIU.