

Cecele Hanyckyj
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October 23, 2015

To: Commissioner Murray, DDS

Re: STS recommendations

I am writing at this time of urgent need to address the dilemma of people with IDD. I have two brothers, one who resides at Southbury Training School since he was 9 years old. He is now 67. My parents tried to keep him home but at the time it became very difficult to manage a family. Southbury became a haven for him and for us because we knew he had the best care and services provided for him. We never considered STS an institution. It was a solution.

My other brother, who is 60, lived at home under the care of my mother until 2006 when she had a stroke. He was in a day program for most of his adolescent and adult life. After the stroke my mom couldn't care for him so an emergency admission occurred and he was placed in a group home. We were all afraid of how he would do but he adjusted very well. The unfortunate thing is that he was placed in a home that was 2 hours away from me, so visiting is a hardship. What is more disturbing though, is that the turnover of staff was significant. From the supervisor to the aides, all have changed multiple times. The only thing that has remained constant is his location and his day program.

I know my family has been fortunate to have the provisions needed at the time when it was crucial for getting the help.

The issues confronting so many families today in Connecticut is the lack of funding for DDS and that the help needed for families is not available. There is a tremendous number on a waiting list and it grows larger all the time. The state has been cutting every year and providing less. These problems are not going away. Throwing the burden back on the families has been a disgrace. These individuals can't speak for themselves, we need to advocate for them, try to get what they need. STS was there and it was good. It provided so much and that has been taken away. The knowledge and experience of these workers have provided the care needed for all types of people with disabilities; whether it is physically or mentally or emotionally, the care was there. Give it back so this problem can repair itself.

There are ways to continue to improve the wellbeing of the people with disabilities. Keep Southbury Training School open and offer new admissions. Repair and reopen the empty buildings. The setting at STS is like a college campus, each cottage is like a group home. What more could you want. There aren't enough group homes now and it would take more money and time to build them just to accommodate the existing numbers of the IDD population (Not to mention the people who suffer from autism). STS could be a facility to provide what is needed for these people. Open the school again for teaching, training and helping the children so they can sustain the abilities that will help them as they grow older. We have to come up with a better plan and take care of our families in need.

Addressing the budget woes of Connecticut shows a clear problem with providing funding for anything but this problem is about people. People who can't take care of themselves. We have to try to go back in time when we cared as a government, as a people, as a family, as an individual. We can do

this. We could cut in other places like – roads, university buildings, university salaries, government paid benefits (insurance, etc.), ask the private sector for funding and give them a cut in taxes for supporting this great need. We have to be creative, get the lawyers working on it, whatever it takes, let's get it done!

Looking at the long-term, STS can really be a solution.

Thank you,

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Enclosed is an email I received just yesterday about the day program my brother attends in Stamford. ARI and it's families are pleading for help. We are in dire times trying to provide help for those in need. Don't turn a deaf ear to this dilemma.

Thank you,

Ceci Hanycyk

Dear ARI Family Members, Guardians, and Friends:

I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the lovely fall weather we have been having this week.

Below is an email from ARC CT with important information regarding the CT state budget for DD services. As you may have heard, after cutting funding for this fiscal year and then announcing nearly \$* million in rescissions last month, the Governor has again announced that there will be further cuts to our funding. ARI, and organizations like ours throughout the state, are barely holding on. We have cut expenses to the bare bones while still proving the services necessary to ensure the health and safety of our consumers. We continue to look for new sources of revenue in a tight economy and to find creative ways to provide services to enrich the lives of those who depend on us every day. Further cuts will be devastating.

If you are able to attend this meeting, please do. If not, please reach out to your legislators by phone, email and mail to let them know that this must stop. Please tell them how these cuts are directly impacting you and your family members. This is a critical time for people with disabilities and for ARI. We need your help.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your support!