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Sent: Wednesday, December 21, 2016 3:35 PM

To: ddsct.co

Subject: DDS 5-YEAR PLAN

Importance: High

The Arc of Greater New Haven was organized by families of individuals with IDD in the early 1950's. The agency has provided advocacy and a variety of services since then for individuals with IDD and their families in the Greater New Haven County and surrounding towns. In the early 1990's, the Board of Directors, decided to focus specifically on providing day support services to individuals with significant intellectual disabilities—many with complex physical disabilities as well. Since that time we have grown to provide daily person centered choice based services to over 100 individuals through our program locations in Milford, Hamden and North Haven.

The ARC of Greater New Haven is committed to supporting people to achieve their personal goals, to exercise their rights, to express their unique cultural identity, to experience respect and to lead a healthy and safe life. Supports are provided in an environment that enriches lives and exemplifies the practice of treating others as another would like to be treated. Opportunities are offered for individuals to learn new skills and to experience activities in the community which promote respectful human contact and social inclusion. All of supports and services have continued to score above state averages on all quality measures reviewed by State of Connecticut Department of Disabilities (DDS).

The State of Connecticut Department of Disabilities (DDS) 5-year-plan, while providing generous project areas and ideas for the future, it says little about the state's greatest asset: Its community-based, private provider network. These providers, just like ARC of Greater New Haven, are qualified and able to provide individuals with IDD effectively and with great care, driven by their missions to provide person-centered supports—this network of providers are and needs to be a priority resource for service delivery in DDS's 5 year plan. If this is not highlighted and utilized, individuals with IDD and their families throughout CT will be left out of many opportunities and waiting lists will continue to grow. Private Community Providers are a solution to provide quality and affordable supports to all individuals who desperately need and require supports. The Private Provider Network must be included in the DDS 5-year plan.

Additionally, it is also of dire necessity that the DDS 5-year plan to create a high priority for the federal requirements that are now found in the CMS HCBS Final Settings Rule. This federal regulations requires that all services funded under Medicaid, like the Day Support Services provided by ARC of Greater New Haven, need to fully comply by March 2019. If Connecticut does not fully comply then their ability to utilize Medicaid to fund services is discontinued and jeopardizes the services provided by the State of Connecticut and all of the Private Providers. More communication and guidance for all services—specifically concerning DSO programs-- to all IDD support providers is essential, so that together we can adapt to these changing requirements and to continue to meet the need of our individuals with IDD and their families. The 5-year plan must provide a focus on this federal regulation, to ensure continued and future services to all individuals with IDD and their families.

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