

Good Morning,

My name is Kiev Federowicz and I am a Home manager for the State of Connecticut, DDS I have worked in the field of developmental disability for over 33 years.

My journey with the department has brought me in contact with dozens of individuals with a variety of needs, hundreds of staff, scores of family members and guardians, in a variety of worksites throughout the state.

I began my journey in the institutional setting of Mansfield Training school. In my career, I have participated in the de-institutionalization process, the development of community-based homes, the expansion of apartment programs, and the training of hundreds of staff in physical & programmatic management.

As a third generation caregiver in this State, I have been on the front lines of some of the leading changes in philosophies, expectations, cultural adaptations, and reformations my entire life.

In this time, I have *never* experienced any plan as devastating as the one I proposed by the Governor and the (former) Commissioner as I see now.

As a State worker, I have never been a particularly vocal challenger against privatization. Indeed, I believe that there are some agencies that, in their own way, do provide better services in some areas.

The issues that I see with the changes that are being pursued are *how* they are being implemented. The speed and process in which we are being told we must dismantle our system is just devastating. The Agency who proclaims to be the center of change in order to support the individual has placed protected health information on a portal for private providers to "shop" for these individuals and encouraged to bid on them to provide services. Services, which have been provided by in many cases by the same staff in the same homes for close to twenty years. Now these individuals are being asked within the space of several months to give up their caregivers and the people that connect them with their families and communities and replace them with a reportedly lower cost version that is allegedly of the same quality. How often does it occur in any industry anywhere that you can get the same quality services for a 1/3 of the cost?

Moreover, what of the long term affects that these changes will have on the individuals, who by the Agency's own mission are to have a stake in the decision of who is to care for their needs? Will they recover from the loss of the long term relationships that they have forged with the staff that have cared for them for the better part of the last two decades?

In the home that I currently manage, we have seven staff whose combined knowledge and expertise add to over 175 years. The individuals in our care have lived together in some cases in the same home for closed to twenty years. I ask again, can a group of staff that have less combined experience than one current staff and is being paid a 1/3 of the rate provide the same quality services. A rate that is comparable to working a national chain box store?

It is a tragedy that our leadership *has not assured parity of compensation* in this field and stopped the auction of individuals to the lowest bidder. Would you choose this model for the care of your loved one?

I will not argue that services cannot be provided for at a better cost.

What I will state is the mechanism that will equitably evaluate the abilities of different providers to give these services does not exist. And until the mechanism does exist for the individual to be able to make an apples to apples side by side comparison in an individual case by case approach then the agency is not fulfilling its own stated mission and should not be allowed to pursue a course which recklessly endangers those that they are mandated to protect and dismantles a system that houses hundreds years of compassion, expertise, and knowledge of the care of individuals with disabilities. I respectfully ask that you ask the hard questions regarding the real costs, the real savings to be achieved, and the real impact that this plan will have on the people that we have a charter to serve and support.

Thank you!

Kiev J. Federowicz

SDSW CT DDS/NR