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**Subject:** DDS 5 yr plan thoughts  
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Hi Jordan and Joe, I have read with great interest the 5 Yr. plan for DDS . Rather than submitting testimony at this time I first want to share my initial reactions.

I have always appreciated working in Connecticut as we have been the pioneers of new and wonderful person centered services for many years. Under your leadership Jordan we have created and advanced some unique living and working experiences for our residents with IDD well before other states. This all occurs because we believe in a shared mission and vision for our folks and we have trained and supported our staff to carry out those initiatives.

As you know there is a staffing crisis in CT and nationally in human services. Particularly ,nursing shortages are at critical levels yet the DDS role of nurses has not diminished; leadership in residential services in particular is quickly becoming a major crisis as those experienced staff who were not given the 11.9% adjustment as entry level staff were given , are leaving in large numbers for other careers. At Horizons alone we have lost over 34 leadership staff since July. And recruiting new direct care staff remains a challenge due to the evolving realization of how difficult this hands on profession really is as a career. I believe this new reality must be reflected in the DDS 5 yr. Plan. This is a people business and without well trained , committed people we cannot carry out the work described in the DDS 5 yr. plan. We need to address this national crisis in an upfront, proactive manner or it will continue to erode the great system we have built in CT.

I welcome any opportunity to discuss this with you.

Best,  
Chris

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