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To Commission Members:

Pathways Community Mental Health serves a large area in the state yet it is the lowest funded agency. The result is we are not able to provide all the services for our consumers that we should and want to do for them.

Because Pathways is the lowest funded, many cuts have occurred and the employees have made many sacrifices. Recently, with the cuts implemented, case managers have had their case load almost doubled, going from 30+ clients to 50+ clients. That stretches a case manager pretty far. Are they able to assist all these consumers at the highest level of services? It is impossible. This is just one of the examples of budget cuts we have been forced to make. Our consumers are not being given all the options that should be available to them.

Another issue we are facing is assisting returning Veterans to overcome the effects of war time obligations they have endured for our country. They have sacrificed much and their families have had to deal with unbearable stress and worry to say nothing of financial hardship. As a Community Mental Health Agency we have an obligation to help them renew the life they had before they went in to combat.

Another concern is Developmentally disabled and mentally ill people in jails and prisons. This is a state wide problem. Psychiatric Hospitals have been closed by the state to save money from 17 hospitals to 5. Jails and prisons have become the new home for many seriously psychologically troubled and developmentally disabled at a MUCH higher taxpayer cost. They do not belong in prisons and jails. These people should be treated humanely and given the proper care in their home communities. And it would be much more economically acceptable placement. This issue should be addressed.

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We need sufficient financing to provide services and options for our population that cannot do it for themselves. As a public entity, it is our obligation to enable our citizens to live the American Dream of a fulfilling, productive and happy life in the community.

Please help us protect and care for our most vulnerable citizens.

These are only a few issues facing the Community Mental Health Agencies. They are serious obligations the public expects us to address to the best of our ability and funding.