

September 11, 2011

Human Services Commission
Public Hearings on Budget Cuts Impact
September 13, 2011
Aurora, Illinois 60506

Dear Commissioners:

Thank-you for allowing me this opportunity, to present my testimony today. My name is Lauren Hyde, my address is 272 A. Whitfield Drive, Sugar Grove, Illinois 60554, phone- 630-466-0987.

I write this letter today on the anniversary of 9/11. It is a day put aside to remember. As I listen to the stories of family members who lost loved ones and those who gave their lives for others, my heart goes out to them. Though it is not a terrorist attack, I can't help but think of the devastation that alcohol and substance abuse has had on my own family growing up. Drugs and Alcohol Abuse are a type of attack on individuals and their families. Where do we go? Where can we get help from these long term effects?

I grew up in a middle class home; my step father was a violent alcoholic. However, my parents had health insurance back in the 70's when people could still get long term treatment if needed. I am very grateful for that. In my teens I had 3 suicide attempts. I was hospitalized at the age of 15 with major depression. I am now 53 and very grateful to be alive. I wonder what would have happened to me if my parents could not afford nor had insurance to get that type of treatment for their daughter. I personally know the emotional pain that mental health and substance use can have on a family, when a member does not have the resources to get the help needed, the whole family suffers dearly, to the extent it affects relationships, health, jobs and education.

At the age of 49 I made a decision to educate myself on addiction and mental health issues, not knowing what direction this would take me in. Four years later I am presently doing an internship in an addiction/mental health center where only patients who have insurance are treated. Due to lack of financial resources I have watched folks having been referred to other treatment centers, where there can be a long waiting list. This may put the individual and their families at risk. How heart breaking for their families. I decided I no longer wanted to feel helpless, I had to do something. Though it is a sliver of a piece of the pie, together we can bring wholeness and purpose back to individuals and families. Please hear the hearts of the people, they are our grandparents, our parents, our children, our grandchildren, our sisters and brothers, our aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, our cousins, they are our family. Please do not cut funding that is so desperately needed for addiction and mental health services.

Thank-you again, for considering my request and for all those that have been affected by this devastating disease.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lauren Hyde". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Lauren Hyde" in the signature block.