



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR
HEALTHCARE AT HOMESM

The Hartford Courant Opinion: Malloy Mental Health Cuts Crippling

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By Deborah R. Hoyt, Wallingford

Have state officials forgotten that they made a conscious policy decision to close inpatient mental health hospitals more than a dozen years ago because these facilities were too costly to run? Officials knew that transitioning thousands of patients with serious and persistent mental illness to home-based behavioral health management by home health agencies would save millions of dollars each year. These home health care nurses and their teams have saved roughly \$26 million just in the last three years alone. One of the largest state budget cuts to Connecticut Medicaid provider services is to behavioral health clients receiving specialized in-home mental health nursing services and medication management.

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy is proposing a 20 percent cut in reimbursement to these home health agencies -- a cut that will force the agencies to decide if they can afford to continue to treat these Medicaid clients.

The reality is that there is no back-up plan to manage the seriously mentally ill Medicaid population at home. These clients will default to hospital emergency rooms, clinics, nursing homes and the streets of our cities. The governor's proposed cuts will have devastating and costly negative implications that cannot be reversed.

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