



DATE: March 2, 2021
TO: Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee
FROM: Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy, The Alliance
RE: H.B. 6461 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force Regarding the Prevention and Treatment of Mental Illness at Institutions of Higher Education.

Good morning Senator Haskell, Representative Elliott, Senator Witkos, Representative Haines and distinguished members of the Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee.

My name is Ben Shaiken, Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy at the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide association of community nonprofits. Community nonprofits provide essential services in every city and town in Connecticut, serving more than half a million people in need and employing 117,000 people across the State. They are an important part of what makes Connecticut a great place to live and work and an important piece of our economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of H.B. 6461 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force Regarding the Prevention and Treatment of Mental Illness at Institutions of Higher Education.**

We commend the Committee for including Section 3 in the bill, which would require institutions of higher education lacking campus behavioral health resources to contract with a community provider of behavioral health services to provide those resources to their students and staff.

Community nonprofits operate a robust network of behavioral health services across Connecticut. Collectively, they provide high quality services to hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents, including substance abuse and mental health treatment services across Connecticut. The community provider system is uniquely situated to contract with an institution of higher education to begin providing the same high-quality services to college students and staff.

Thank you for your consideration of this important topic.