



DATE: March 25, 2022

TO: Appropriations Committee

FROM: Gian-Carl Casa, President & CEO, The Alliance

RE: H.B. 5436 An Act Establishing a Task Force on Substance Use Disorder Services and the Expenditure of Opioid Litigation Settlement Funds

Good morning, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Gian-Carl Casa, President & CEO, CT Community Nonprofit Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is the statewide organization representing the nonprofit sector. Community nonprofits provide essential services to over half a million individuals and families in Connecticut every year and employ 115,000 Connecticut workers, improving the quality of life in communities across the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 5436, An Act Establishing a Task Force on Substance Use Disorder Services and the Expenditure of Opioid Litigation Settlement Funds. The Alliance supports the submission of draft plans for the use of opioid litigation settlement funds to be reviewed by the Appropriations and Public Health Committees of the Connecticut General Assembly.

Connecticut will receive \$300 million over 18 years as part of the \$26 billion settlement with pharmaceutical distributors Cardinal, McKesson, and AmerisourceBergen and manufacturer Johnson & Johnson. The opioid litigation settlement funding represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to strengthen behavioral health services, many of which have been in crisis due the combination of chronic underfunding, spiking inflation, workforce shortage and an increase demand in services as people begin to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specifically, this legislation would require the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to submit a draft allocation plan to both Committees, followed by a joint public hearing, which will provide a public forum for comments from behavioral health professionals and people with lived experiences with addiction or are in recovery. Indeed, input is needed from the people doing the work and who have had lived experiences for the funding to have the biggest impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.