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## FRIENDS

Everybody needs friends  
from beautiful beginnings to bitter ends  
Someone to hold on to the rope  
and help us all to cope.  
Friends help us find beauty in life  
and ease to everyday strife  
Friends help us see the light  
and the way out of any plight  
They make life worthwhile  
with their kindness and their smile  
They walk us through thick and through thin  
no matter what a mess we are in  
They are there when we need them  
and they have no reason to condemn  
They are true and they are true  
there isn't anything a friend wouldn't do  
and there is nothing more beautiful  
than the friends I find in all of you....

Donna Shibovich

EXHIBIT V Senate Committee on Finance

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Hello. My name is Donna Marie Shibovich and I am a fighter for mental health issues. I am a consumer representative for NAMI and I belong to a client action team as well as an advisory board. There is a drastic need for more funding for the mental health budget seeing that a whole lot of things are being chopped up and not put back together again. For example, we at NNAMHS used to be able to provide bus passes free of charge for those who really needed them. That is, however, a small issue when we look further. I have had NNAMHS as my payee for seven and a half years and just recently it was decided that me and many others will have to find a new payee. This has been traumatic and stressful for me. I am thankful that my case coordinator, Renee Jurosovich, hasn't been one of the many who come and gone in a flash. The turnover for case coordinators and doctors has been ridiculous. We have a hard time keeping good doctors and we have interns who will not likely stay with us at NNAMHS. We are desperate for continuity of care and in order to keep people we need something to offer them. We need more funding for preventative maintenance issues such as being able to medicate with atypicals instead of paying the exorbitant cost of the alternative of hospitalization. We need more programs like PACT to be instituted within the state and beyond. The PACT program has been very successful in treating the

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chronically mentally ill. I would hate to see their funding cut from the budget. We also need to consider funding for the Mental Health Court. This court helps keep the mentally ill population out of jail and this service reduces the incidence of homelessness and living on the streets. Jail is not the place for the mentally ill. The Mental Health Court is very successful and should serve as a shining example for others to follow. While attending the advisory board, I was shown the stats and I was amazed at the huge numbers of people - even children - who are on waiting lists for services. These lists are incredible. We need more funding to help these people before it is too late... Please consider mental health in your budget this session. We really need this help and - from a personal standpoint - I couldn't live (literally) without your help and funding and support..

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME .. It is more important than you think!

Donna Shibovich

Donna Shibovich

