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Dear Members of the Connecticut Criminal Justice Commission,

My name is Giovanna Mozzo, I am Co-Director of The Hub, a program of Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP). Our program is funded by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). DMHAS has 5 regions in the state and in each region, there is a Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization (RBHAO). The hub is the designated RBHAO in region 1. One of our many roles is to assess BH needs, develop priorities & recommendations, while addressing prevention, treatment & recovery needs across BH. We also gather data, develop plans, promote awareness, and advocate for change. Another role is we coordinate and support stakeholder work within the region. We work with all 14 local prevention councils (Stratford, Trumbull, Monroe, Bridgeport, Fairfield, Easton, Westport, Norwalk, Darien, New Canaan, Wilton, Weston, Stamford & Greenwich) in prevention strategies to promote mental health and reduce substance mis-use in each of the communities. We facilitate regional meetings discussing suicide prevention and problem gambling while serving as a liaison between the region and state.

This past June we completed a Regional Priority Report that was submitted to DMHAS. In that report we found that mental illness among teens and young adults were **increasing**. As well as suicide at all ages, including children. Just last year a 12-year-old in our region died by suicide. School districts have been dealing with the increase of vaping nicotine and THC. Teens who vape are 3x more likely to transition to traditional cigarettes. Those that continue to vape are now becoming very ill. There are 25 cases being investigated in CT, 7 in Fairfield County. Just recently one CT resident died while being treated for vaping linked illness.

We also found that prescription and dosages of opioids and benzodiazepines are **decreasing**. However, fentanyl is increasing deaths. as well as the perception of harm from marijuana has reduced drastically.

Members of the CJC, while you are searching for Connecticut's next Chief State's Attorney; please keep in mind that we want a professional that understands and has interest in mental health and substance mis-use across the life span in prevention, treatment and recovery. The person should understand that these are illnesses and should be treated as such. Very similar to one that has cancer, heart disease or diabetes.

Sincerely,

Giovanna Mozzo, MSW