

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 17, 2016

Samuel Ridders, Administrator
USDA Rural Development
Rural Business-Cooperative Service
1400 Independence Ave. SW, Rm 5803-S STOP 3201
Washington, DC 20250-3201

Dear Mr. Ridders:

We are pleased to write in support of United Services' proposed Windham Region Clinical Center in Mansfield, Connecticut and their efforts to secure funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Direct Loan program. United Services (USI), the Local Mental Health Authority serving Northeast Connecticut, has been seeking state bonding support for a proposed 28,000 square foot behavioral health center to serve the Windham Region (including Willimantic and surrounding towns of Windham, New London and Tolland Counties) since 2011. This funding would allow United Services to meet expected federal requirements for what will hopefully become a system of Federally Qualified Behavioral Health Centers.

Behavioral health care was recently identified by a Community Needs Assessment as the most pressing need in Eastern Connecticut, and United Services' proposed Clinical Center will provide the region with expanded access to enhanced behavioral health services as well as other important health and social services. As with many communities in the country, opiate addiction and other community mental health and addiction treatment needs are at epidemic proportions in the Windham region of Eastern Connecticut. United Services' outpatient mental health clinic volume, one of many essential services provided, has more than doubled since 2008 with units of services growing from 8,644 in 2007 to 23,059 as of 2014, a year in which USI served nearly 6,000 unduplicated clients. In the last year alone United Services provided:

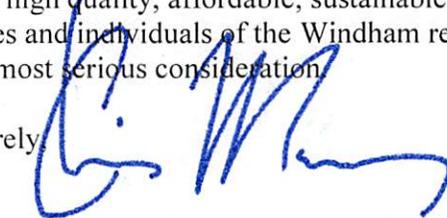
- 2,204 adults and children with psychiatric services
- 1,028 adults and children with domestic violence services
- 2,362 local employees covered through our Employee Assistance Program, and;
- 695 children with child and family behavioral services

This investment would create much needed, high quality, affordable, sustainable behavioral health care to serve the pressing needs of the families and individuals of the Windham region. We are hopeful that the USDA will give your proposal it's most serious consideration.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate



JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress