Good day Chairperson Downey and members of the Assembly Human Services Committee. My name is Cathy Chin and I am testifying on behalf of ABCD. Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts as part of your discussion on A4013 which requires certain group homes to install electronic monitoring devices in communal areas.

It was a privilege and very grounding to listen to the five and a half hours of testimonials provided by parents at the October 22 hearing. It was evident that we must advocate for the full continuum of mental health services and supports for a traumatized population in addition to supports for their families and caregivers.

The issues surrounding use of camera surveillance as a possible intervention are very complicated. All other extremely serious and consequential issues aside, at the end of the day, the current research has found that there is no evidence that camera surveillance will reliably protect individuals from abuse and neglect (which was supported by some of the family testimonials) and may make them less safe in their own home. ABCD cannot support a policy in which the research concludes that people may be less safe. I refer you to our white paper which provides more detail.

I would like to share my responses to questions asked of me over the last few months.

1. **ABCD’s response is “born out of our inability to contain abuse and neglect.”**

   That is a misinterpretation. ABCD’s response is because the proposed solution appears to disregard not only the research, but human service culture and expertise.

2. **ABCD needs to find more data to support its claims that people may be less safe with camera surveillance.**

   On the contrary, it is ABCD which asks for evidence to justify the claim that camera surveillance will enhance safety and quality of life.

   This may seem counterintuitive, but the data shows that camera’s in home could actually make people less safe. How?

   - By pushing perpetrators further into the darkness away from the eyes of dedicated and caring workers;
   - Possibly increasing complacency (on the ground and in policy); and
   - Replacing human staff with technology.
3. **ABCD’s response is because providers don’t want to spend the money.**

   This is incorrect. We do not want to use precious resources on a solution which may only give us the idea of safety.

4. **Camera surveillance is standard for staff in a bank, why not staff in a home?**

   Business principles have been applied to the social service sector, but the reverse is also true, especially in areas to improve employee performance and quality.

   Providers employ multiple actions including employing systemic research-based methods; developing strategic plans and interventions; ensuring the right approaches for the circumstances; testing structures, resources and skills; making needed changes; ongoing reviews and renewals. Throwing cameras into the mix could not only waste precious resources but be counter-productive and harmful. Let us instead develop and mandate the best in the nation quality and safety best practice standards for all DD licensed providers.

   Let us rise to that challenge.

5. **This legislation allows for choice.**

   Freedom includes the freedom to fail: but what about harm? Choice requires not only the full awareness of the pros and cons but also, the right to change one’s mind.

   Currently, there are agencies that use surveillance cameras and others that do not. Choice exists on the front end

6. **“Camera surveillance works at Edna Mahan, why not at group homes?”**

   Edna Mahan is a prison. DD residences are homes.

   Just because the proposed solution uses new technology may not mean that our thinking behind it is. Whatever we do, let us not move backward into the future.

   The current research has found that there is no evidence that camera surveillance will reliably protect individuals from abuse and neglect and may make them less safe in their own home. ABCD believes that the research should rule the day.

   Thank you.