



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 332

February Session, 2000

Substitute House Bill No. 5019

House of Representatives, March 30, 2000

The Committee on Human Services reported through REP. GERRATANA of the 23rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

An Act Concerning Healthy Families.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17a-56 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof:

3 (a) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall establish the
4 structure for a state-wide system for Healthy Families Connecticut,
5 which is based on the national Healthy Families model, and which is
6 intended to demonstrate the benefits of preventive services by
7 significantly reducing the abuse and neglect of infants and by
8 enhancing parent-child relationships through hospital-based
9 assessment with home outreach follow-up on infants and their families
10 within families identified as high risk.

11 (b) Within available appropriations, the Commissioner of Children
12 and Families shall establish healthy families pilot programs in
13 geographic areas which are not currently served by prevention

14 outreach services and which have a high rate of confirmed child abuse
15 and neglect, a high rate of infant mortality and low birthweight
16 infants, or a high rate of teen pregnancy. On and after July 1, 1997, the
17 commissioner shall establish three additional pilot sites. Services shall
18 be provided on a voluntary basis to families identified through the
19 assessment process as having a high risk of child abuse or neglect.

20 (c) The healthy families pilot programs shall: (1) Provide a
21 comprehensive risk assessment of all newborn children and their
22 families; (2) identify families that would benefit most from the
23 program; (3) provide and coordinate support services including, but
24 not limited to, community-based home visiting intervention services,
25 counseling, child care and primary health care services; and (4)
26 provide follow-up and support services until the child attains the age
27 of five.

28 (d) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall: (1) Develop
29 the comprehensive risk assessment to be used by the pilot programs;
30 (2) develop the training program, standards, and protocols for the pilot
31 programs; and (3) develop, issue and evaluate requests for proposals
32 to procure the services required by this section. In evaluating the
33 proposals, the commissioner shall take into consideration the most
34 effective and consistent service delivery system allowing for the
35 continuation of current public and private programs.

36 (e) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall establish a
37 data system to enable the pilot programs to document the following
38 information in a standard manner: (1) The level of screening and
39 assessment; (2) profiles of risk and family demographics; (3) the
40 incidence of child abuse and neglect; (4) rates of child development;
41 and (5) any other information the commissioner deems appropriate.

42 (f) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall report to the
43 General Assembly on the establishment, implementation and progress
44 of Healthy Families Connecticut, on January first and July first, of each

45 year. The first report shall be due on January 1, 1996.

46 (g) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall expand the
47 healthy families pilot program to a state-wide program by July 1, 2005.

48 Sec. 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000.

KID Committee Vote: Yea 12 Nay 0 JFS C/R HS

HS Committee Vote: Yea 18 Nay 0 JF

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: Significant Cost, Potential Significant Future Revenue Gain

Affected Agencies: Department of Children and Families, Council to Administer the Children’s Trust Fund, Department of Social Services

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

State Impact:

Enactment of this bill will result in an expansion of the number of Healthy Families/First Steps programs in Connecticut by thirteen. Sixteen programs will be operating as of June 30, 2001, assuming passage of either the Senate or House versions of the Revised FY 01 Appropriations Act. A statewide program would call for operation of a Healthy Families/First Steps site in each of twenty-nine birthing hospitals in Connecticut. A phase-in of these new programs would be anticipated over the FY 02 – FY 05 period.

Under the bill’s provisions, the projected FY 05 aggregate cost of the Healthy Families/First Steps program would exceed its FY 02 current services amount by \$2.9 million. Included in this sum is \$2.6 million to support thirteen new Healthy Families/First Steps contractors (at \$200,000 each), \$100,000 to support the addition of a First Steps

component to two existing Healthy Families programs (at \$50,000 each), and \$200,000 to support four staff necessary to provide technical assistance, training and contract administration duties in light of the program expansion.

A possible phase-in schedule would result in the need for incremental appropriations of \$800,000 in each of FY 02 and 03, \$600,000 in FY 04 and \$700,000 in FY 05. This would support the development of three new Healthy Families/First Steps sites in each of FY 02, 04 and 05, with four new programs opening in FY 03; the addition of two administrative staff in each of FY 02 and FY 05; and the addition of a First Steps component to two existing Healthy Families programs in FY 02.

It should be noted that the Council to Administer the Children's Trust Fund and the Department of Social Services are presently investigating the potential for federal reimbursement of fifty percent of the cost of the Healthy Families/First Steps program under Medicaid. Federal approval would be required before such a claim could be made, and would likely be dependent upon achieving a statewide program. At such time that the state receives approval to begin submitting claims, a significant revenue gain will result. It cannot be determined at this time in which fiscal year this would occur.

Finally, while the bill states that the commissioner of children and families shall implement the program enhancement, in practice, the Council to Administer the Children's Trust Fund (within the DCF for administrative purposes only) is the responsible agency.

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5019

AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTHY FAMILIES.

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the children and families commissioner to expand the Healthy Families Connecticut pilot program to statewide operation by July 1, 2005. This voluntary program identifies families at high risk of abusing a newborn child and provides them with long-term home visitors and referrals to community support services. The Children's Trust Fund currently funds the program, which operates in 12 (out of 29) hospital catchment areas.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2000

COMMITTEE ACTION

Select Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference

Yea 12 Nay 0

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 18 Nay 0