

Human Services Sub-Committee of Appropriations, February 11, 2010

**Testimony in support of the Nurturing Families Network**

**A Program of The Children's Trust Fund**

**Division of the Department of Social Services**

Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Galit Sharma. I am the Clinical Supervisor of the Nurturing Families Network (NFN) at the Coordinating Council For Children In Crisis, Inc. in New Haven. I urge you to vote against decimating this vital program, as proposed in the Governor's budget.

The plan calls for closing 14 out of 19 Nurturing Families sites in New Haven and Hartford - a dramatic program reduction that would eliminate the Nurturing Families Network almost entirely in both cities. The remaining five sites will have to operate under a 35% budget cut. This reduction will set us ten years back in terms of program development and outcomes in the community.

More importantly, **it will NOT save the state money:**

- The Governor estimates in her proposal that cutting these non-hospital based sites will save the state 2,463,451 dollars.

- Considering that annual child maltreatment rate for high-risk families is 20%, it can be estimated that the proposed cut will result in additional 66.4 families in DCF care every year in New Haven alone. Based on previous estimation by Dr. Charles Super of UCONN, their annual cost to the state will be 1,989,211 dollars.
- Adding the nine sites that under the proposal will close in Hartford, **the State will spend about 5,000,000 additional dollars on families that would end up in the DCF system. This conservative estimate is twice as much as the 2,463,451 dollars the Governor hopes to save !**
- In short, eliminating the proposed Nurturing Families sites will not save the state money; it will only result in shifting funds from a prevention program that works and costs less, to DCF intervention programs that cost more.

The Nurturing Families Network is a well-documented and heavily researched program. The University of Hartford's Center for Social Research has been following it for 14 years and reports impressive results. Families in the program show only 3% of child maltreatment compared with 20% in other high-risk families (!! ) -- and parents in the program make significant gains in employment and education.

Pulling out our support, especially at this economically challenging time, would be devastating to many families and would come at a high price.

The Nurturing Families Network is a program that works, makes sense

AND saves money!

Please support Connecticut's families and say NO to the Governor's proposal.

Thank you for your time.

Galit Sharma

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