



at New Britain General and Bradley Memorial

My name is Jennifer Hernandez and I am a Program Manager for the Department of Social Work at the Hospital of Central Connecticut. I oversee the Nurturing Families Network and Family Empowerment grants funded by Children's Trust Fund through Department of Social Services.

In this current fiscal crisis there is no doubt that, we need to make some cuts in spending. We all have to look at our spending and evaluate what are our must haves and can do withouts. Individually our programs throughout the state have experienced some reductions and have been able to continue to operate with the decreases within budgets that are already small. We have managed to run effectively over the past year with cuts to our spending. We do an amazing amount of work with little money. Within our programming, the average annual cost to serve a family is around \$3,000 or \$58.00 a week. When we look at DCF and intervention services, they cost our state an estimated \$30,000 annually per family or \$577.00 week. The cost saving speaks for itself.

Over the past ten years, our state has invested millions of dollars into Children Trust Fund programs to prevent child abuse and neglect. This investment has been made wisely. We know that what makes us stand out from other human services programs is that we have been able to prove that our programming is working. We are among few programs that are evaluated for outcomes. We have evidence that we work and that we reduce the incidences of child abuse and neglect.

Within the Children's Trust Fund, we have evidence that substantiates that the rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect in high-risk families receiving home visitation is significantly lower than state or national rates. For Nurturing Families Network families, the rate of child abuse and neglect is on average 3% compared to 20% for families not participating in this type of programming. The numbers offer us justification as to why we should keep the programs open. We are preventing abuse and literally saving the state money.

In addition, I need you to comprehend that though there may be some ligament rational in closing or decreasing funding in some sites, the proposed dollar amount left to fund the proposed 29 hospitals will leave use unable to provide the services that are so valued. What is proposed will close programs. There is simply not enough money left. If programs are closed, you need to consider that there are hundreds of staff members that will be added to the unemployment roles. The balance to comprehend the impact is a challenge; we are looking at staff layoffs as well as devastating impacts on families enrolled. I urge you to understand that, as grant funded programs, our host organizations will not have positions for us. We will not simply be absorbed into new positions; we will be out of work. If closed we send the message, "we are not important, and prevention simply does not matter." It contradicts the mission and work we have done.

Thank you

Jennifer Hernández, MS

**New Britain General campus**

100 Grand St.

New Britain, CT 06050

**Bradley Memorial campus**

81 Meriden Ave.

Southington, CT 06489