



**Testimony of Mary Ellen Mooney, RN, Director of Inpatient Medical and Surgical Services, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, to the Appropriations Committee Regarding the Department of Social Services budget for Fiscal Years 2010-2011
February 11, 2010**

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am Mary Ellen Mooney, Director of Inpatient Medical and Surgical Services at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. As a member of the Connecticut Children's nursing leadership, I am here today representing the pediatric nurses who strive each day to provide the best possible health care services to the children of our region.

At Connecticut Children's, nothing is more important than a child's health. That's why all of the healthcare professionals at Connecticut Children's chose to become part of the only hospital in the region dedicated exclusively to children.

With increased job losses, more families are relying on HUSKY and Connecticut Children's is seeing the impact of this change every day. Between October 2008 and October 2009, our Medicaid discharges increased from 46% to 53%. This is by far the highest percentage of any Connecticut hospital. During the same time, our Medicaid volume in the Emergency Department rose from 58% to 64%. By providing a critical safety net for HUSKY, Connecticut Children's suffers huge financial losses.

The recession and state budget crisis certainly present all of us with difficult decisions. We are asking today that you focus special attention on the needs of our children and families. While it is clearly our mission to provide access to vulnerable children, Connecticut Children's is likely to experience even greater Medicaid losses as families shift from employer-based coverage to HUSKY.

As our region's only academic medical center devoted exclusively to children, Connecticut Children's enhances the quality of life in our state, we support the local economy, and we are good for kids. Recently a 3 year old little boy was admitted to Connecticut Children's Medical Center with complex medical needs. Fortunately we have both the medical expertise to address the boy's many needs and a family-centered pediatric approach to take care his family. At 2 months old, he suffered a cardiac arrest that caused severe brain injury. While in our hospital he received care and consultation from many of our departments. His primary nurse coordinated the plan of care for the multidisciplinary team. He was seen by a pulmonary physician for his lack of oxygen causing him to have blue spells, a neurologist for his increased seizures, and a nutritionist to ensure that he had the right amount of calories each day through his tube feedings. He had numerous tests, including a cardio echogram, sleep studies, and an

Electroencephalogram. Throughout his stay on our inpatient unit he received high quality, technical monitoring to ensure his safety.

When he was ready for discharge, Connecticut Children's pediatric case managers organized his care at home to facilitate a safe transition from the hospital setting. They partnered with a home care company to set up oxygen, monitoring, feeding pumps and medications in his home. Our nurse practitioner team identified and set him up with a pediatrician in the Mansfield area. Our nutrition team helped connect the family to the WIC program and an appointment was made for his parents to meet with a Department of Social Services representative to help the family apply for insurance.

At Connecticut Children's we were able to close all the gaps in his care that other hospitals were unable to accomplish. Because of the pediatric expertise of the team coordinating care and educating his parents, this little boy is now receiving the services he deserves.

The State of Connecticut insures our neediest children by providing them with HUSKY cards. Those children come to Connecticut Children's to get high quality family centered pediatric health care services. Every day we provide those services. Inadequate revenue from HUSKY will jeopardize our physicians' and nurses' ability to provide all the care that our children and families deserve, whether they are covered by HUSKY or not. We ask the Appropriations Committee to provide more equitable Medicaid revenue so that we can preserve these critical resources.

Thank you.