

Madame Chair and distinguished committee members,

My name is Pamela Lorenzo. I am the Program Manager of the Visiting Nurse Association of South Central CT. Nurturing Families Network (NFN) Program, funded through the Children's Trust Fund which is now a division of DSS.

I am here today to ask you to defeat Governor Rell's proposal to eliminate non-hospital Nurturing Families Network Programs in Hartford and New Haven. The Nurturing Families Network is the lead prevention program for child abuse and neglect in our state. Governor Rell's cuts would eliminate a number of vital non-hospital sites which provide valuable parenting services to first time parents. This program began in 1995 as Healthy Families and has grown to include all 29 birthing hospitals as well outstanding agencies that have invested in the well being of our children.

Research has shown that Nurturing Families Network (NFN) has significantly reduced child abuse and neglect in our state in the many years of its operation. Our home visitors work very closely with enrolled first time families, over 4,000 per year statewide, to provide the needed child development education, resources and support first time families desperately need. In light of the recession, the increases in poverty and family stress on our vulnerable families will undoubtedly heighten vulnerability to domestic violence, child abuse and neglect. At a cost of \$33,000 per year per substantiated DCF case as opposed to \$3,500 per year for home visiting services through NFN, you can see how the savings to our state add up. Furthermore by the time children are referred to DCF real damage has already been done.

Governor Rell is also proposing a 30% cut to all NFN sites. This would also result in numerous jobs lost as well as families who would no longer be able to receive the services. Where will they go?? What will they do?

This is a critical time for all of the families currently enrolled and those that would be enrolled in the future. I cannot imagine if services stopped for those currently enrolled in our program. Not to say employment would suffer. With this loss well over 100 employees would lose their jobs between eliminations and downsizing as well as over 1000 fewer families would receive these services.

Please consider keeping the non-hospital Nurturing Families Network sites, vote against the 30% cut and keep the Nurturing Families Network program as the only research based prevention program in the state.

I thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pamela Lorenzo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pamela Lorenzo

Program Manager

VNA/SCC Nurturing Families Network

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