TESTIMONY OF
BENJAMIN BARNES
SECRETARY
OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
Before The Appropriations, Human Services and Public Health Committees

September 27, 2011

FFY 2012 ALLOCATION PLANS FOR FEDERAL BLOCK GRANTS

Good afternoon Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak, Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Appropriations, Human Services, and Public Health Committees. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Governor Malloy's federal fiscal year 2012 block grant allocation plans.

Before you today are allocation plans for the Social Services (SSBG), Community Services (CSBG), Community Mental Health Services (CMHS), Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT), Maternal and Child Health (MCH), and Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grants. Together, these six block grants represent over $56 million in federal funding for Connecticut.

As always, we cannot be certain of final funding levels until Congress acts on the federal budget. Currently, proposed funding levels are only available from the President's budget and the Senate Appropriations Committee's budget. It is also unknown how the work of the federal Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction and other federal deficit reduction efforts will ultimately affect these discretionary grants. In the President's budget, the SSBG is level funded, the CMHS is increased by 3% and the others are all reduced – MCH by 1%, SAPT by 16%, CSBG by 49% and the PHHS is eliminated. The allocation plans for these block grants were prepared assuming level funding as instructed by federal agencies, but include contingency plans in case more or

less federal funding is ultimately awarded to Connecticut. Even in the case of the PHHS block grant, where the President proposed eliminating the funding, states were directed by the CDC to prepare plans based on level funding.

Commissioner Rehmer, Dr. Plant, Commissioner Mullen, and Deputy Commissioner Beaulieu will provide specific information on each of the block grant allocation plans but there is one consistent issue I would highlight: declining levels of carry forward funding will make it difficult in the coming years to sustain the important programs funded by these block grants – even if the block grants are ultimately level funded. Next year's allocation plans for many of these block grants will likely need to include programmatic reductions due to reduced availability of carry-forward funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I urge your support of these six block grant allocation plans.