



**Testimony of Susan Roman, MPH, RN, Program Director, Special Kids Support Center,  
Connecticut Children's Medical Center  
to the Appropriations Committee regarding the Department of Public Health Budget  
for Fiscal Years 2016-2017**

**March 6, 2015**

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am Susan Roman, MPH, RN, and I am Program Director for the Special Kids Support Center, the regional care coordination entity for children with special health care needs, at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. I am here today to speak with you about the critical need to maintain the Department of Public Health funding that enables Connecticut Children's and other regional providers throughout the state to support and empower the families of children with special needs.

Special Kids Support Center has been providing care coordination services to Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs in the North Central Region of the State for approximately 6 years, with funding through the Department of Public Health. The goal of care coordination is to assist families in accessing appropriate and timely care through partnerships with the medical home and linkages to community services and resources.

Over this period of time, Special Kids Support Center has screened 10,726 children and youth, and provided care coordination services to 6,114 to children and youth and their families. Through support and advocacy, we assist families with obtaining critical services and resources that have a positive impact on children's health and development. During this time, we have witnessed an increase in the number of children and youth that can be considered vulnerable and at risk for negative outcomes. By coordinating the medical, developmental, behavioral/mental health care and linking families to vital social services, we increase those protective factors, such as social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, and concrete support in times of need, so vital to family resiliency and positive outcomes.

Beyond its support for children with complex medical conditions, Special Kids Support Center plays an essential role in transforming the delivery of care coordination for all Connecticut children and their families through the establishment of a Care Coordination Collaborative. The Hartford Care Coordination Collaborative (HCCC) was created as a vehicle to improve communication among diverse programs providing care coordination to children and families; increase the efficiency and effectiveness of care coordination within a comprehensive child health system; and serve as a resource for medical homes seeking community-based services for their families. The goal is to essentially "coordinate the care coordinators" and ensure that children and families are connected to services across multiple sectors as effectively and

efficiently as possible. We are now expanding our focus beyond child health services, family support, and early care and education to also include neighborhood health and safety, housing, food and nutrition, child welfare, transportation, and even workforce and economic development. HCCC has now become the care coordination model for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs across the State. Due to the success of this innovation, the Department of Public Health is funding the replication of the Collaborative throughout the remaining 4 medical home regions in the State. Funding is essential to continuing our system building in support of children's healthy development.

On behalf of Special Kids Support Center and our current and future families, I ask that you restore the funding for the Department of Public Health's Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. If you have questions about this testimony, please contact Jane Baird, Connecticut Children's Director of Government Relations, at 860-837-5557.