



SAINT FRANCIS
Hospital and Medical Center



University of
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School of Medicine

February 4, 2015

Good afternoon, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and members of the Committee on Children,

I am Adam Perrin M.D. I am writing today in my role as an active physician supporter of Reach Out and Read Connecticut, to lend my support to **Senate Bill 209, An Act Concerning Funding for the Reach Out and Read Program.**

As a family physician, I view low literacy as a health problem. Like the approach to other health problems, the best strategy to deal with illiteracy is prevention. Reach Out and Read is a national program to promote literacy by changing the way family physicians and pediatricians practice medicine. Reach Out and Read gives doctors an evidence-based strategy to promote child development and learning. The program is highly economical, requiring little infrastructure, providing books purchased at a sharply discounted rate and relying on family physicians and pediatricians as an army of highly trained volunteers and trusted authorities to bring this important preventive strategy to families.

In my Hartford-based practice, which primarily serves a poor Medicaid-supported population, barely a week goes by without a parent expressing their gratitude for the great gift of reading as provided by the Reach Out and Read program.

The mission of Reach Out and Read is to make books and literacy guidance a routine part of pediatric primary care so that children grow up with a love of books and reading, with a special emphasis on children growing up in poverty. The Reach Out and Read model is a scientifically validated model to promote literacy skills beginning at the early age of 6 months. Fifteen peer-reviewed research studies demonstrate important positive outcomes when families receive books and guidance through the ROR program. These studies have been carried out in at least 10 different states, including Connecticut, with bilingual families, non-English speaking families and families for whom there are no books in the home language, yet the results are the same: Reach Out and Read families are significantly more likely to read to their children and to have more children's books in their homes. Of utmost importance, research documents that children served by the Reach Out and Read program show an increase of 4-8 points on vocabulary tests by the age of 2. For a two-year-old, this increase represents an approximately six-month gain, developmentally-speaking, preventing the deficits in school readiness skills routinely observed and measured in children living in low-income families.



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No community interested in the health and welfare of its children can be without Reach Out and Read. Parents need and want guidance about reading with their very young children and they need and want quality children's books. Reach Out and Read fills this need and narrows the gap for the neediest families. **Please support Senate Bill 209, An Act Concerning Funding for the Reach Out and Read Program.** The children of Connecticut deserve nothing less.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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