

Testimony in Opposition to Proposed Budget Cuts to DPH-Funded
Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs

Honorable Committee Members:

My name is Lakeisha Sims and I am a Pediatric Care Coordinator at Family Centered Services of CT, Inc. I would like to strongly oppose proposed budget cuts to the DPH-funded CT Medical Home Initiative for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs program.

As a Care Coordinator for children with special healthcare needs I know first hand the dramatic impact these cuts will impose on families. *Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs* (CYSHCN) are children and youth age birth-21 who have, or are at increased risk for, a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally.

Many of these families have little to no income and either work two or more jobs or are unable to work due to medical complications themselves. Parents are often overwhelmed with the care of the sick child and their siblings, as they struggle to deal with a complicated and fragmented system of services and supports. Care coordination provides the assistance in managing and maintaining the health of these CYSHCN.

DPH currently funds five (5) care coordination contractors that provide care coordination services to children and youth throughout the State. Care Coordinators link children and youth

and their families/caregivers to services and resources beyond the primary care site and even beyond health care, ensuring collaboration with schools, mental health services, social services, and other community based programs to make sure that these patients get all the treatment, services and supports they need to achieve optimal health, attend school and stay out of the emergency room.

In the regional program I represent which serves south central Connecticut, I am one of three Care Coordinators who have caseloads of 30 children each and we have a waitlist of 40. Our goal is optimal health for all children and this goal would certainly be undermined by the further reduction of these services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lakeisha Sims, M.S.
Pediatric Care Coordinator
South Central CT Medical Home Initiative
Family Centered Services of CT
formerly Coordinating Council For Children In Crisis, Inc.
90 South Main St
Middletown, CT 06457
Tel: (860) 358-6913
Fax: (860) 344-9249

