

New York State Citizen Review Panels

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February 25, 2010

Assembly Member Sheldon Silver
Speaker of the Assembly
932 Legislative Office Building
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12248-0001

Dear Speaker Silver:

As Chairs of the three New York State Citizen Review Panels, we are writing to ask your consideration for the restoration of funding for two home visiting programs. We are very disappointed that Healthy Families New York and Nurse-Family Partnership program received considerable cuts in the Executive Budget. These programs are primary prevention programs with proven results that are known to prevent child abuse and neglect. We urge you to make both a priority in your budget negotiations.

Restore funding for Healthy Families New York (HFNY) to \$25 million.

This primary child abuse and neglect prevention program was funded at \$25 million just two years ago. The 2010-11 Executive Budget cuts funding to \$15 million, effectively closing many programs across the state. HFNY currently serves 5,000 families a year in some of New York's highest need communities, with a proven track record of better outcomes for children in high-risk families.

- 50% of families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits upon entering the program are no longer in need of those services
- 81% are enrolled in a job training or education program by the child's first birthday
- 57% of participants under age 21 have received a high school degree or GED by the child's first birthday

Most importantly, HFNY reduces the incidence of child abuse and neglect. Healthy Families employs nearly 500 people in 39 communities across the state.

Restore funding for Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) to \$5 million.

While there are several other home visiting programs in New York State other than Healthy Families New York, NFP is the only other one to be funded by the state and negatively impacted by the 2010-2011 Executive Budget.

NFP programs are located in New York City and in Monroe and Onondaga counties, serving an estimated 2,500 families. It also has a proven track record of better outcomes for children in high-risk families:

- 83% increase in labor force participation of mothers at child age four
- 56% reduction in emergency room visits for accidents and poisonings

- 46% increase in father's presence in the household
- 20% reduction in use of public assistance

Research shows that every dollar invested in NFP can yield more than \$5 in return.

Importantly, the budget cuts to both HFNY and NFP may disqualify New York State from applying for \$100 to \$150 million in Federal aid for home visiting. This is due to the eligibility criteria regarding a match of state dollars to obtain this funding.

As citizens charged with reviewing the policies, procedures and practices in child protective services, we strongly believe that child welfare reforms can lead to cost savings and improve families' lives in New York State, especially those that support families before a call to the SCR is needed. These two home visiting programs are primary prevention programs with measureable outcomes. They protect children from harm and help build strong, stable, nurturing families. Please consider restoring their funding in your budget negotiations.

We thank you for your consideration.

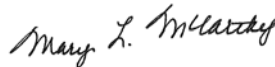
Sincerely,



David Lansner
Co-Chair
NYC panel



Elba Montalvo
Co-Chair
NYC Panel



Mary McCarthy
Chair
Eastern Panel



Ellen Kennedy
Chair
Western Panel