

# *New York State Citizen Review Panels*

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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

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### **Press Statement**

#### **Governor Spitzer Increases Financial Support for Preventive Services**

Services that support vulnerable children and families received critical funding increases in Governor Spitzer's 2008-2009 *Executive Budget* maintaining the state's commitment to keep children safe and families intact. "The proposed \$153.7 million increase for preventive services in the Office of Children and Family Services Budget is vital in these uncertain economic times, as the number of cases reported to the state's central register typically increase when families struggle," said David Lansner, Co-Chair of the New York City Citizen Review Panel. "With additional support services available, local districts of social services can work to keep children from placement in foster care and keep families from re-entry into the child welfare system," said Ellen Kennedy, Vice Chair of the Western Panel.

In addition to the increased funding for vital community services, the Governor's Budget includes funds for transformation of the data management system that tracks outcomes for children and families who are referred to Child Protective. Resources to extend health coverage for foster care youth up to age 21 received the attention of Citizen Review Panels from across New York State. Stacy Alvord, Chair of the Eastern Panel, stated, "There is new light shining in Albany for children who end up in the care of the juvenile justice and foster care systems. Health care and education are critical for our youth to achieve their full potential."

Eric Brettschneider, Co-Chair of the New York City Panel, affirmed the panels' support for the Governor's child welfare funding by congratulating his dedication to families who are struggling financially. "These families are our state's most vulnerable and will need additional support in an economic decline. The Governor's Budget supports them. In addition, the funding addresses concerns raised in three of the recommendations made in the Panels' 2007 report."

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Citizen Review Panels are mandated by federal law. In 1999 the New York Legislature passed S371-b of the Social Services Law establishing panels in New York State to evaluate the extent to which agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities in accordance with the State's Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Plan, child protection standards set forth in the federal law, and any other criteria that the panel considers important to ensure the protection of children.