



KEY HUMAN
SERVICES, INC.

"Advancing the Human Spirit"

2-13-2020

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My Name is Joyce Lewis and I am the Executive Vice President of Key Human Services an agency providing services to individuals across the lifespan statewide. Today I am speaking on behalf of our Birth to Three Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021,

I am here today to thank you for your ongoing support to Birth to Three over the years. Thank you for annualizing \$2.9 million dollars to better support the growing population of Birth to Three.

Community nonprofits provide essential services in every city and town in Connecticut, serving people in need and employing tens of thousands. They are what make Connecticut a great place to live and work.

I am here to respectfully **request that the legislature appropriate \$461 million over five years for community nonprofits**. Since 2007, community nonprofits have lost at least \$461 million in state funding that has not kept pace with inflation or adequately covered increased costs and demand for services over the last thirteen years. Please:

1. Commit to increasing funding by the full \$461 million, or 28%, by Fiscal Year 2025;
2. Appropriate \$128 million (a state net of \$67 million after federal reimbursement) in new funding for community nonprofits in Fiscal Year 2021, a 7% increase;
3. Index increases to inflation, to ensure that state funding will keep pace with increased costs in the future.

A portion of this funding could be used to eliminate the Parent Cost Participation Fee in Birth to Three. In 2003, the legislature approved the proposal to begin charging families for Birth to Three services as an additional funding stream beyond private insurance, Medicaid, state appropriations and federal funding. This is an allowable action under IDEA. The projection for this funding stream was \$2 million dollars. Birth to Three has never collected \$2 million dollars a year in the 17 years that it has existed.

The revenue for Parent Cost Participation otherwise known as family fees runs around \$1.2 million dollars annually.

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Let's talk now about the consequences of charging families for participation in Birth to Three. In 2003, the profile of Birth to Three insurance coverage was 37% Medicaid and 63% private insurance. Over the years of family fees there has been a dramatic shift. The profile is 35% private insurance and 65% Medicaid while in CT overall only 20% of the population was covered by Medicaid in 2019.

What do these figures tell us? Do children on Medicaid need Birth to Three more than children on private insurance? Has the incidence of developmental delays somehow shifted to primarily children on Medicaid? The answer to both of these questions is obviously no. It tells us that Parent Cost Participation fees have driven families from the Birth to Three system. Families cannot afford this burdensome monthly fee on top all of the costs associated with living in Connecticut.

We know that Birth to Three services are effective. 54% of children with significant developmental delays that participate in Birth to Three services do not require specialized services at the age of 5. We know that Birth to Three services are cost effective. In 2003, we found that every dollar spent in Birth to Three saved \$10 per child per year adding up to hundreds of thousands of dollars in special education costs.

I ask you to eliminate the Parent Cost Participation fees. Just because you can does not mean you should.

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