

# Department of Social Services Annual Report State Fiscal Year 2017



**Dannel P. Malloy**  
Governor

**Roderick L. Bremby**  
Commissioner



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## CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**State Fiscal Year 2017**  
(July 2016-June 2017)

**Roderick L. Bremby, *Commissioner***  
**Kathleen M. Brennan, *Deputy Commissioner, Administration***  
**Janel Simpson, *Deputy Commissioner, Programs***

***Established - 1993***  
***Statutory Authority - Title 17b***  
***Central Office – 55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105***  
***Number of Employees – 1,620***  
***Operating Expenses - \$250,080,099***  
***Program Expenses - \$3,348,143,534***  
***Structure - Commissioner’s Office, Field Operations, Administrative Operations, Program Operations***

### MISSION

- Guided by shared belief in human potential, we aim to increase the security and well-being of Connecticut individuals, families, and communities.

### VISION

- To become a world-class service organization.

### GOALS

- Health: Support optimal physical, oral, and behavioral health and well-being.
- Economic Security: Reduce barriers to employment and strengthen financial stability and self-sufficiency.
- Learning Preparedness: Improve readiness and ability to learn and thrive.
- Generative Impact: Utilize holistic, evidence-based, and culturally appropriate services as a platform for improving quality of life.
- Public Trust: Transform the way DSS does business.

## **STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITY**

The Department of Social Services is designated as the state agency for the administration of 1) the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program, pursuant to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981; 2) the Refugee Assistance Program, pursuant to the Refugee Act of 1980; 3) the Legalization Impact Assistance Grant Program, pursuant to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986; 4) the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996; 5) the Medicaid program, pursuant to Title XIX of the Social Security Act; 6) the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamp), pursuant to the Food Stamp Act of 1977; 7) the State Supplement to the Supplemental Security Income Program, pursuant to the Social Security Act; 9) the state Child Support Enforcement Plan, pursuant to Title IV-D of the Social Security Act; 10) the state Social Services Plan for the implementation of the Social Services and Community Services Block Grants, pursuant to the Social Security Act; 11) the state plan for the Title XXI State Children's Health Insurance Program; and 12) State plan for the U.S. Department of Energy – Weatherization Assistance Program for Low- Income Persons – Title 10, Part 440, Direct Final Rule – Federal Register, June 22, 2006.

## **DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

The Department of Social Services delivers and funds a wide range of programs and services as Connecticut's multi-faceted health and human services agency. DSS serves about 1 million residents of all ages in all 169 cities and towns, supporting the basic needs of children, families and individuals, including older adults and persons with disabilities. With service partners, the agency provides health care coverage, food and nutrition assistance, financial assistance, child support services, energy aid, independent living services, social work services, protective services for the elderly, home-heating aid, and additional vital assistance. DSS has approximately 1,600 dedicated staff led by Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby, with services delivered through 12 field offices, central administration, and online and phone access options. DSS was established on July 1, 1993, through a merger of the Departments of Income Maintenance, Human Resources, and Aging.

## **PUBLIC CONTACT POINTS (ONLINE AND PHONE)**

- DSS general: [www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss)
- DSS ConneCT (online benefit accounts, service eligibility pre-screening, applying for services, renewing benefits, reporting changes): [www.connect.ct.gov](http://www.connect.ct.gov); application guidance also at [www.ct.gov/dss/apply](http://www.ct.gov/dss/apply)
- Child Support Services: [www.ct.gov/dss/childsupport](http://www.ct.gov/dss/childsupport)
- Connecticut Child Support Payment Resource Center: [www.ctchildsupport.com](http://www.ctchildsupport.com)

- HUSKY Health Program (Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program): [www.huskyhealth.com](http://www.huskyhealth.com); to apply online: [www.accesshealthct.com](http://www.accesshealthct.com) or [www.connect.ct.gov](http://www.connect.ct.gov)
- CT Medical Assistance Program (for health care providers): [www.ctdssmap.com](http://www.ctdssmap.com)
- My Place CT (long-term services and supports): [www.myplacect.org](http://www.myplacect.org)
- Winter heating assistance: [www.ct.gov/staywarm](http://www.ct.gov/staywarm)
- John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut: [www.ct.gov/fatherhood](http://www.ct.gov/fatherhood)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps): [www.ct.gov/snap](http://www.ct.gov/snap)
- Medicaid for Employees with Disabilities: [www.ct.gov/med](http://www.ct.gov/med)
- Reporting suspected client or provider fraud or abuse: [www.ct.gov/dss/reportingfraud](http://www.ct.gov/dss/reportingfraud)
- Special information for service partners: [www.ct.gov/dss/partners](http://www.ct.gov/dss/partners)

**Toll-free information:**

- DSS Client Information Line & Benefits Center: 1-855-6-CONNECT
- 2-1-1 Infoline: 24/7, toll-free information and referral, crisis intervention services: call 2-1-1. Operated by United Way of Connecticut with DSS funding
- General DSS information and referral (recorded information): 1-800-842-1508
- TTY for persons with hearing impairment: 1-800-842-4524
- Child Support:
  - Child Support Payment Disbursement Unit : 1-888-233-7223
  - Connecticut Child Support Call Center: 1-800-228-KIDS (1-800-228-5437)
- Connecticut AIDS Drug Assistance Program (CADAP): 1-800-233-2503
- Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders: 1-800-445-5394
- Reporting suspected fraud/abuse; and benefit recovery (including lien matters): 1-800-842-2155
- John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut: 1-866-CTDADS (1-866-628-3237)
- Winter heating/Weatherization assistance: 2-1-1 or 1-800-842-1132

- HUSKY Health/Medicaid/Children’s Health Insurance Program information and referral, applications: 1-877-CT-HUSKY (1-877-284-8759). Contact information for current member support with major categories of HUSKY Health coverage:

<b>Type of coverage:</b>	<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Telephone Number:</b>	<b>Website:</b>
<b>Medical Coverage (Community Health Network of CT)</b>	HUSKY Health Member Services	1-800-859-9889	<a href="http://www.huskyhealthct.org">www.huskyhealthct.org</a>
<b>Behavioral Health Coverage (Beacon)</b>	Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership	1-877-552-8247	<a href="http://www.ctbhp.com/">www.ctbhp.com/</a>
<b>Dental coverage (BeneCare)</b>	Connecticut Dental Health Partnership	866-420-2924 855CTDENTAL (855-283-3682)	<a href="http://www.ctdhp.com">www.ctdhp.com</a>
<b>Non-Emergency Medical Transportation</b>	LogistiCare	1-888-248-9895  Reservations:  1-866-684-0409	<a href="http://www.logisticare.com/members-riders.php">www.logisticare.com/members-riders.php</a>
<b>Pharmacy coverage</b>	DSS Division of Health Services Pharmacy Unit	Member services:  1-866-409-8430	<a href="http://www.ctdssmap.com">www.ctdssmap.com</a>

## **DSS CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION**

55 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT 06105

**Roderick L. Bremby**, Commissioner

**Kathleen M. Brennan**, Deputy Commissioner/Administration

**Janel Simpson**, Deputy Commissioner/Programs

### **Department Chief of Staff and Directors:**

Chief of Staff and Affirmative Action Director: Astread Ferron-Poole; Communications Director: David Dearborn; Human Resources Director: Diane Benedetto; Legal Counsel, Regulations, Administrative Hearings Director: Brenda Parrella; Counselor and Government Relations Director: Alvin R. Wilson, Jr.; Eligibility Policy and Economic Security Director & Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Director: Marc Shok; Integrated Services Director: Sharon LaFargue; Health Services Director: Kate McEvoy; Reimbursement and Certificate-of-Need Director: Christopher LaVigne; Medical Director: Robert Zavoski, M.D.; Health Services Integrated Care Director: William Halsey; Health Services Community Options Director: Kathy Bruni; Child Support Services Director: John Dillon; Fiscal Services Director: Michael Gilbert; Chief Innovation Officer: Joe Stanford; Information Technology Services Director: Vance Dean; Quality Assurance Director: John McCormick; Field Operations Director: Marva Perrin; Field Operations Deputy Director: Cathy Robinson-Patton; Field Operations Tactical Planning Director: Melissa Garvin; Community Services Director: Carlene Taylor; Social Work Services Director: Dorian Long; Organizational and Skill Development Director: Darleen Klase; Facilities Operations Director: Dorothy DiLernia.

### **News media contact:**

- David Dearborn, 860-424-5024  
Email: [david.dearborn@ct.gov](mailto:david.dearborn@ct.gov)

## **DSS FIELD OFFICE INFORMATION**

**Services provided through 12 DSS Service Centers** include Temporary Family Assistance; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps); Medical Assistance (HUSKY Health Program; Medicaid for elders and adults with disabilities; Medicaid for Low-Income Adults; Medicare premium affordability assistance); State-Administered General Assistance; State Supplement Program; Social Work Services; and Child Support Services.

The Department of Social Services' customer service modernization initiative--called 'ConneCT'--provides applicants, clients and the general public with multiple access points to the federal and state programs administer by the agency. DSS customers now have more options and can reach the department online, on the phone, or in person. For more information on these contact points: [www.ct.gov/dss/connect](http://www.ct.gov/dss/connect).

Thanks to modernization efforts, DSS staff work with a statewide electronic document management system to transmit, store and process client documents. All 12 field offices have lobbies where clients may see eligibility services workers or drop off information, called Service Centers. Nine of the 12 field offices also have Processing Centers, where staff process work associated with cases from around the state. Three of the 12 field offices have eligibility services workers who staff the DSS statewide telephone Benefits Center.

Please note: Local phone numbers were replaced by the statewide DSS ConneCT Client Information Line & Benefits Center number: 1-855-6-CONNECT (1-855-626-6632); TTD/TTY 1-800-842-4524 for persons with speech or hearing difficulties.

### **Service Centers**

Service Centers provide direct assistance to eligible clients in the areas of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Financial Assistance, State Supplement, Medical Assistance and State-Administered General Assistance. In addition, field offices also provide on-site Child Support Services, Social Work Services, as well as Quality Assurance services. Offices are open Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. For more information: [www.ct.gov/dss/fieldoffices](http://www.ct.gov/dss/fieldoffices).

### **Benefits Center**

DSS clients can dial one toll-free number --1-855-6-CONNECT (1-855-626-6632), or TTD/TTY 1-800-842-4524 (for persons with speech or hearing difficulties) -- from anywhere in Connecticut to reach information or services. This phone access is called the **Client Information Line and Benefits Center**. Callers can self-serve through an IVR (interactive voice-response) system, 24/7, or reach a Benefits Center eligibility services worker directly, if they prefer, during business hours. Benefits Centers staff are located in the **Bridgeport, Waterbury** and **New Britain** field offices. Benefits Center eligibility services workers are available by phone Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### **Field Office Locations**

- **Greater Hartford**—20 Meadow Road, Windsor 06095; Musa Mohamud and Judy Williams, Services Operations Managers.
- **Manchester**—699 East Middle Turnpike, Middletown 06040; Elizabeth Thomas, Social Services Operations Manager.
- **New Britain**—30 Christian Lane, New Britain 06051; Phil Ober, Social Services Operations Manager.
- **Willimantic**—676 Main Street, Willimantic 06226; Tonya Beckford, Social Services Operations Manager.
- **New Haven**—50 Humphrey Street, New Haven 06513; Lisa Wells and Brian Sexton, Social Services Operations Managers; and Cheryl Stuart, Social Services Program Manager.
- **Middletown**— 2081 South Main Street, Middletown, 06457; Tyler Nardine, Social Services Operations Manager.



- **Norwich**—401 West Thames Street Norwich, 06360; Tyler Nardine and Tonya Beckford, Social Services Operations Managers.
- **Bridgeport**—925 Housatonic Avenue, Bridgeport 06604; Fred Presnick, Social Services Operations Manager; and Yecenia Acosta, Social Services Program Manager.
- **Danbury**—342 Main Street, Danbury 06810; CarolSue Shannon, Social Services Operations Manager.
- **Stamford**—1642 Bedford Street, Stamford, 06905; Rachel Anderson, Social Services Operations Manager.
- **Waterbury**—249 Thomaston Avenue, Waterbury, 06702; Karen Main and Peter Bucknall, Social Services Operations Managers.
- **Torrington**—62 Commercial Boulevard, Torrington, 06790; Tricia Morelli, Social Services Program Manager.

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## **SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS/HIGHLIGHTS OF SFY 2017**

### **Overview**

The Department of Social Services continued to deliver vital public benefits to more than 1 in 4 Connecticut residents in 2017. **As the fiscal year closed in June, DSS was serving approximately 1 million individuals across all programs.** Agency field staff served the public directly at 12 offices and telephone Benefits Centers, while central office staff administered specialized services and supported field operations across the full range of direct and funded programs.

Among other initiatives, the department continued its **‘ConneCT’ service modernization** initiative and implementation of the new **‘ImpaCT’** advanced eligibility management system and integrated document management system; worked with Access Health CT, Connecticut’s health insurance exchange/marketplace, to **continue implementation of the national Affordable Care Act**, under the leadership of Governor Dannel P. Malloy and Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman; continued to build on a variety of service and purchasing **advances in one of the nation’s leading Medicaid programs**; and achieved additional **performance benchmarks in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (continuing as one of the top SNAP programs in the nation).

ImpaCT is replacing the department’s 1980s-era legacy eligibility management system with a modern system designed to upgrade and support eligibility determination and service delivery. It also will be fully integrated with current document management systems and access to electronic records. Benefits to clients include: easier-to-read and more helpful DSS notices and letters; optional email notifications; new tools to help DSS be even more efficient, accurate and timely; integration with online applications, renewals and change reporting; and other advances from the new-generation eligibility system.

### **Advances in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

DSS continued to improve its quality of service to over 371,500 Connecticut residents enrolled in SNAP as SFY 2017 ended. **The department posted consecutive 100% timeliness rate for SNAP application processing** in the last two six-month periods evaluated by the federal government, July 2016 through December 2016, and October 2016 through March 2017. Based on actual case sampling, DSS is at the top of the Northeast Region and 2<sup>nd</sup> overall in the United States. The department’s 3.04% payment error rate is far better than the national average and continues a trend of significant improvement since 2013. Case and Procedural Error Rates (CAPER) have also improved significantly. Over the past year the department improved its CAPER rate from 10.20% to 8.70%. As SFY 2017 closed, Connecticut ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation and top in the northeast region. Meanwhile, approximately \$687 million in federal revenue came into Connecticut’s food economy last fiscal year. This equates to about \$119 million over 2010,

representing a huge impact on hunger/poverty and help to the local economy.

The 2010 Agriculture Appropriation Act provided authority and funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to demonstrate and rigorously evaluate methods of reducing or preventing food insecurity and hunger among children in the summer months. In response, the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (SEBTC) demonstration was developed to test a household-based method of delivering nutrition assistance to low-income children during summer months. The Summer Food Service Program and the Seamless Summer option provide meals for thousands of low-income children in Connecticut annually. The SEBTC demonstration program allows chosen school districts to provide selected households an additional resource to combat hunger in the communities where they live. SFY 2017 was the Department of Social Services' sixth year in administering the Summer Electronic Benefits for Children, in collaboration with the Department of Education and End Hunger CT!.

### **Advances in Medicaid/HUSKY Health application processing**

The department has sustained significant improvements in Medicaid application processing. Long-Term Services and Supports has maintained a timely application processing rate of more than 89.7% through the midpoint of SFY 2017. Overall, 93.4% of all Medicaid applications were processed timely through the midpoint of SFY 2017. Additionally, applicants for HUSKY A (children/parents/relative caregivers/pregnant women) and HUSKY D (low-income adults without dependent children) continue to receive real-time application determinations when applying through the DSS-Access Health CT shared eligibility system. Medicaid/HUSKY enrollment reached 756,320 at the midpoint of SFY 2017.

### **ConneCT – Modernizing DSS Service Delivery**

#### **Online:**

- Current DSS clients can visit [www.connect.ct.gov](http://www.connect.ct.gov) to set up online accounts (called 'MyAccount') and get benefit information without visiting or calling their local DSS office.
- Clients and the general public can visit [www.connect.ct.gov](http://www.connect.ct.gov) to apply online for services, renew benefits and report changes and upload documents needed for eligibility determination.
- Clients and the general public can also visit [www.connect.ct.gov](http://www.connect.ct.gov) to check on food, cash and medical service eligibility through a handy pre-screening tool (called 'Am I Eligible?').
- The ConneCT online portal is also available on the main DSS webpage at [www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss).

**By Phone:**

- To reach our Client Information Line & Benefits Center, the single-statewide toll-free number for client access:

Call 1-855-6-CONNECT (1-855-626-6632)

TTD/TTY 1-800-842-4524 for persons with speech or hearing difficulties

- The automated ‘interactive voice response’ telephone system helps DSS clients get the information they need without waiting to speak to an eligibility worker. Recipients and applicants can establish a secure PIN to check on benefit details and the status of documents submitted. Clients also have the option of speaking to a worker, during business hours.

**In Person:**

- DSS services are available at 12 field offices. For a list, please visit [www.ct.gov/dss/fieldoffices](http://www.ct.gov/dss/fieldoffices).

**Implementing the Affordable Care Act**

Connecticut’s nation-leading implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) continued in SFY 2017, with the Department of Social Services partnering with Access Health CT in a shared/integrated eligibility system encompassing HUSKY Health (Medicaid/Children’s Health Insurance Program) and private qualified health plans offered through the exchange. The ACA represents major eligibility change for the majority of Medicaid, with beneficiaries transitioning from traditional eligibility criteria to the so-called Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) criteria. Most significant for public access, is expanded income-eligibility standards in Medicaid for low-income adults without dependent children (from approximately 56% to 138% of the federal poverty guideline).

Online applications are processed in real time, at [www.accesshealthct.com](http://www.accesshealthct.com), allowing people to apply for most areas of Medicaid, CHIP or private health insurance and have their eligibility determined immediately through the integrated eligibility process. **At the midpoint of SFY total Medicaid enrollment was 756,320, including 209,484 in the Medicaid expansion for low- income adults without dependent children (HUSKY D).**

DSS and its Division of Health Services have implemented advances through the ACA that:

- 1) enable implementation of new Medicaid-funded preventive benefits, including coverage for smoking cessation and family planning;
- 2) authorize extension of the federal Money Follows the Person initiative, which enables residents of nursing facilities to transition to independent living in the community;
- 3) bring to Connecticut an additional \$77 million in support of long-term services and supports;
- 4) provide funding and direction for various care delivery reforms, including health homes and a shared savings initiative under the State Innovation Model test grant. Please see the ‘Federal Revenue Maximization’ section on below for more information.

The State of Connecticut has also continued to invest in and to promote ACA-related care delivery and payment reforms in HUSKY Health, including state support for increased rates of reimbursement for primary care providers, practice transformation under the nationally recognized Person-Centered Medical Home initiative, Intensive Care Management (ICM) under an Administrative Services Organization structure, integration of behavioral health and medical services under a health home model, and hospital payment modernization.

### Serving Connecticut Residents: A Sampling of Critical DSS Programs

DSS programs showed total enrollment of more than 1 million unique individual recipients at the midpoint of SFY 2017.

Individual program numbers included:

- 371,981 residents in 209,713 households receiving federally-funded SNAP benefits at the end of SFY 17.
- 27,527 individuals in 11,011 households served by the Temporary Family Assistance program at the end of SFY 17.
- 756,320 individuals receiving benefits through the Medicaid program (including HUSKY A for children, parents, relative caregivers and pregnant women; HUSKY C for elders and persons with disabilities; and HUSKY D for low-income adults without dependent children) at the midpoint of SFY 2017.

### Health Service Delivery and Purchasing Initiatives

#### **Federal Revenue Maximization**

Connecticut Medicaid sought and received extensive new federal resources under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that:

- enabled many new people to access coverage under expansion of Medicaid eligibility – participation in HUSKY D, our Medicaid expansion group, increased from **99,103** individuals in December 2013 to **209,484** individuals in December 2016.
  - *Research shows that coverage gives people more financial security from the catastrophic costs of a serious health condition tends to improve mental health, and enables earlier diagnosis of conditions such as diabetes.*
- permitted Connecticut Medicaid to cover new services that are of great benefit to Medicaid beneficiaries – just one example is coverage of tobacco cessation services (counseling, treatment and medications)

- *This is a well-targeted service because many sources estimate that far more Medicaid beneficiaries smoke than is typical of the general population.*
- provided new family planning services for eligible individuals
  - *Family planning services support good reproductive health, and help reduce unintended pregnancies, which in turn promotes better long-term health, completion of education and improved outcomes of subsequent pregnancies.*
- expanded the highly successful Money Follows the Person program, which supports individuals in transitioning from nursing facilities to living in the community
  - *MFP has supported 4,589 individuals with disabilities and older adults in moving from nursing facilities to their setting of choice.*
- provided \$77 million in resources under the State Balancing Incentive Program that will help support Medicaid beneficiaries in accessing home and community-based long-term services and supports
  - *These new resources will help to address the historical imbalance of LTSS resources as between nursing facilities and home and community-based services.*
- enabled the DMHAS-led behavioral health, health home effort
  - *Health homes are enabling local mental health authorities and their affiliates to integrate behavioral health, primary care and community-based supports for people with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness.*
- funded rate increases, which have been continued on a somewhat more limited basis by the State, that have increased participation of primary care practitioners in Medicaid.
  - *Access to primary care is a key aspect of Medicaid reform and an essential means of reducing use of the emergency department, as well as effective management of chronic conditions.*

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### **Administrative Services Organization Initiatives**

Connecticut Medicaid is structured as a self-insured, managed fee-for-service model, much like the model used by many employers (including the State of Connecticut) for their employees. This is in stark contrast to almost all other state Medicaid programs, which utilize managed care arrangements, under which companies receive capitated payments for serving beneficiaries. Connecticut Medicaid contracts with four statewide Administrative Service Organizations (ASOs), respectively, for medical, behavioral and dental health and for non-emergency medical transportation services. Each ASO provides member and provider services, utilization review, quality management and improvement services to the members of the Medicaid program. An

important feature of the ASO arrangement is that three of the ASOs provide Intensive Care Management (ICM), an intervention developed specifically to meet the diverse needs of our most socially and medically vulnerable members.

To incentivize ASO performance, a percentage of each ASO's administrative payments is withheld by the Department pending completion of each fiscal year. Each ASO must demonstrate that it has achieved identified benchmarks items related to, but not limited to health outcomes, healthcare quality and both member and provider satisfaction outcomes in order to receive the incentive payments.

#### ❖ *Data Analytics and Intensive Care Management*

Among the many benefits gained from Connecticut's self-insured model of care is a continuously growing, fully integrated single set of claims data, which spans all coverage groups and covered services, Connecticut Medicaid takes full advantage of data analytic tools in order to stratify beneficiaries by risks and to connect those who are at high risk or who have complex health profiles with ASO ICM support. Risk stratification is based on medical and pharmacy claims, member/ provider records, and results from diagnostic laboratory and imaging studies. Factors used to determine risk include: 1) overall disease burden (ACGs); 2) disease markers (EDCs); 3) special markers (Hospital Dominant Conditions and Frailty); 4) medication patterns; 5) utilization patterns; and 6) age and gender.

ICM is structured as a person-centered, goal directed intervention which is individualized that is tailored to each beneficiary's needs. Connecticut Medicaid's ICM interventions:

- integrate behavioral health and medical interventions and supports through co-location of clinical staff of the medical and behavioral health ASOs;
- augment Connecticut Medicaid's Person-Centered Medical Home initiative, through which primary care practices receive financial and technical support towards practice transformation and continuous quality improvement;
- are directly embedded in the discharge processes of a number of Connecticut hospitals;
- sustain the reduction of emergency department usage, inpatient hospital admissions and readmission rates;
- reduce utilization in confined settings (psychiatric and inpatient detoxification days) among individuals with behavioral health conditions; and
- reduce use of the emergency department for dental care and significantly increase utilization of preventative dental services by children.

#### ❖ *Interventions through Department's medical ASO, Community Health Network of Connecticut (CHNCT)*

CHNCT utilizes a stratification methodology to identify members who presently frequent the emergency department (ED) for primary care and non-urgent conditions as well as those at



risk of future use of acute care services. High risk members are defined as those who have claims data of seven or more ED visits in a rolling year; members with twenty 20 or more ED visits in a rolling year are defined as ED Super Users and are considered highest risk. ICM focuses on high risk members with multiple co-morbid, advanced, interrelated, chronic and/or behavioral (psychiatric and/or substance abuse) conditions. These members frequently exhibit instability in health status due to fragmented care among multiple providers, episodes or exacerbations and/or complications and impaired social, economic and material resources and tend to have higher ED utilization. Many of these members are homeless and are in need of coordinated housing and access to health homes. Individuals with multiple chronic conditions benefit from an integrated plan of care that incorporates behavioral and non-medical supportive services.

For calendar year 2016, ICM interventions have: 1) **reduced emergency department (ED) usage** for members engaged in the CHNCT ICM program **by 19.25% and inpatient admissions by 43.46%**; 2) **reduced readmissions by 53.57%** for those members who received Intensive Discharge Care Management (IDCM) services.

### *❖ Interventions through Department's behavioral health ASO*

Under the direction of the three state agencies that manage the Connecticut Behavioral

Health Partnership (the Departments of Social Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Children and Families), Beacon Health Options used claims and other data to identify the five Connecticut hospitals that were associated with the greatest number of

Medicaid high utilizers. Beacon Health Options then designed and implemented a multi-pronged approach to reduce the inappropriate use of the emergency department for individuals with behavioral health conditions. This approach includes 1) assigning ICM care managers to individuals who have visited the ED, with a primary or secondary behavioral health diagnosis, seven or more times in the six months prior to participation in ICM; 2) assigning peer specialists to members who could benefit from that support; and 3) dedicating a Regional Network Manager to help facilitate all-provider meetings to address the clinical and social support needs of the involved individuals. These provider meetings are multi-disciplinary and include, but are not limited to representatives from housing organizations, substance abuse and mental health providers, shelters, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and staff from the respective EDs.

The cohort is a static list of Medicaid members who have high needs and costs. This is a member-centric intervention; the peers conduct outreach, engagement and community care coordination and ongoing intervention strategies to engage the member; once the member has opted-in to the intervention the peers provide care coordination and transitional care management intervention services; outcomes are related to whether the member had a decreased use of inpatient and ED as well as decreased cost.

Currently a total of 240 members have opted-in to the intervention. The members within the cohort will receive intensive care management services and peer services in order to reduce hospital utilization. This initiative is using a propensity score matching evaluation



methodology to evaluate the intervention of ICM and peers to those Medicaid members who elected not to receive the service. The purpose of evaluation is to determine if the intervention results in statistically significant outcomes when comparing the cohort that receive the intervention to the cohort that did not receive the intervention.

#### ❖ *Benefits of ASO structure*

ASO arrangements continue to substantially improve beneficiary outcomes and experience through centralization and streamlining of the means of receiving support. The ASOs act as hubs for member support, location of providers, ICM, grievances and appeals. ASO arrangements have also improved engagement with providers, who now have a single set of coverage guidelines for each service, and a uniform fee schedule from which to be paid. Providers can bill every two weeks, and ‘clean claims’ are paid completely and promptly through a single fiscal intermediary – DXC technology. This promotes participation and retention of providers, as well as enabling monitoring of the adequacy of the networks needed to support a growing population of beneficiaries.

Additionally, the ASOs continue to collaborate on high risk individuals and cohorts of individuals. For example, the behavioral health and medical ASO frequently co-manage individuals that have complex behavioral health and medical conditions.

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### Key Accomplishments Across Health Services

#### ❖ *Access to Care*

##### **Medical Providers**

Primary care providers: 3,461

Specialists: 13,686

Network growth over calendar year 2016: 1.02%

- Recruited and enrolled 16 new practices into DSS’ Person-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) program
- Increased Children and Adolescents’ Access to Primary Care Practitioners by 1.21%

##### **Behavioral Health Providers**

Behavioral Health Providers: 4,817

Network Growth over calendar year 2016: 18.76%

##### **Dental Providers**

Primary care providers: 1,933

Specialists: 402

Network growth over calendar year 2016: 7.0%

##### **Pharmacies**

Pharmacies: 698

❖ *Utilization Management and Cost-Effectiveness*

- Inpatient days per 1,000 member months (MM) decreased by 1.3%
- The average length of stay decreased by 2.9%
- Utilization per 1,000 MM for emergent medical visits decreased by 1.1%
- Utilization per 1,000 MM for non-emergent medical visits decreased by 7.3%

❖ *Care Coordination, Outcomes and Quality*

- Reduced the total hospital readmission rate by 0.80%
- Reduced the Emergency Department visit rate by:
  - 2.38% for HUSKY C
  - 4.60% for HUSKY D
- Increased the rate for Breast Cancer Screening by:
  - 3.26% for HUSKY A and B
  - 1.93% for HUSKY C
  - 2.12% for HUSKY D
- Increased the rate for Cervical Cancer Screening by:
  - 1.66% for HUSKY A and B
  - 2.93% for HUSKY C
- Increased the rate for Chlamydia Screening in Women Total by:
  - 2.53% for HUSKY A and B
  - 4.75% for HUSKY C
  - 1.87% for HUSKY D
- Increased the rate for Avoidance of Antibiotic Treatment in Adults with Acute Bronchitis by:
  - 7.99% for HUSKY A and B
  - 5.76% for HUSKY C
- Increased the rate of Spirometry Testing in the Assessment and Diagnosis of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) by:
  - 16.08% for HUSKY D
- Increased the rate for Pharmacotherapy Management of COPD Exacerbation-Bronchodilator by:
  - 2.79% for HUSKY A and B
  - 5.05% for HUSKY D
- Increased the rate for Controlling High Blood Pressure by:
  - 18.78% for HUSKY A and B
  - 9.29% for HUSKY C
  - 25.47% for HUSKY D
- Increased the rate for Persistence of Beta-Blocker Treatment after a Heart Attack by:
  - 9.06% for HUSKY A and B
  - 4.52% for HUSKY C
  - 5.04% for HUSKY D
- Increased the Statin Therapy for Patients with Cardiovascular Disease rate by:
  - Received Statin Therapy-Total:

- 2.44% for HUSKY A and B
- 1.91% for HUSKY C
- 1.84% for HUSKY D
- Statin Adherence 80%-Total:
  - 19.05% for HUSKY A and B
  - 3.46% for HUSKY C
  - 8.04% for HUSKY D
- Increased the Cardiovascular Monitoring for People with Cardiovascular Disease and Schizophrenia rate by:
  - 5.68% for HUSKY C
- Increased the rate for Adult BMI Assessment by:
  - 8.07% for HUSKY D
- Increased the rates for Prenatal and Postpartum Care by:
  - 10.39% for Postpartum Care
  - 2.19% for Timeliness of Prenatal Care
- Increased the rate of Frequency of Ongoing Prenatal Care ( $\geq 81\%$ ) by 12.39%

❖ *Child and Adolescent Well Care Outcomes for HUSKY A and B*

- Increased the rate of Developmental Screening in the First Three Years of Life by 20.88%
- Increased the rate of Developmental and Behavioral Health Screening in Children Ages 1-18 by 27.53%
- Increased the rate for Well Child Visits in the First 15 Months of Life for 6+ visits by 11.11%
- Increased the rate for Well Child Visits in the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Year of Life by 1.80%
- Increased the Adolescent Well Care Visit rate by 2.24%
- Increased the Lead Screening rate by 9.83%
- Increased the Childhood Immunization Status Rates by:
  - 1.84% for MMR
  - 2.41% for VZV
- Increased the Immunizations for Adolescents rate by:
  - 2.85% for Meningococcal vaccine
  - 2.38% for Combination #1
- Increased the rates for Follow-Up Care for Children Prescribed ADHD Medication by:
  - Initiation Phase: 5.01% for HUSKY A and B
  - Continuation and Maintenance Phase: 4.22% for HUSKY A and B
- Increased the rates for Weight Assessment and Counseling for Nutrition and Physical Activity for Children and Adolescents by:
  - 12.17% for BMI Percentile Total
  - 1.78% for Counseling for Physical Activity 12-17 Years
- Increased the rate for Appropriate Testing for Children with Pharyngitis by:
  - 5.17% for HUSKY A and B
- Decreased the Non-Recommended Cervical Cancer Screening in Adolescent Females rate by:
  - 24.02% in HUSKY A and B
  - 18.46% in HUSKY D

### ***Diabetes Outcomes***

- Increased the HbA1c Control (<7) rate by:
  - 5.35% for HUSKY A and B
  - 28.89% for HUSKY D
- Increased the HbA1c Control (<8) rate by:
  - 13.98% for HUSKY C
  - 18.09% for HUSKY D
- Reduced the HbA1c Poor Control (>9) rate by:
  - 1.99% for HUSKY A and B
  - 11.16% for HUSKY C
  - 17.37% for HUSKY D
- Increased the rate of retinal eye exams by:
  - 4.95% for HUSKY A and B
  - 7.06% for HUSKY C
- Increased the rate of controlling high blood pressure for diabetic members (<140/90mm Hg) by:
  - 1.08% for HUSKY A and B
  - 16.59% for HUSKY C
  - 4.88% for HUSKY D
- Increased the Medical Attention for Nephropathy rate by:
  - 4.64% for HUSKY C
- Increased the Statin Therapy for Patients with Diabetes rate by:
  - Received Statin Therapy:
    - 1.95% for HUSKY A and B
    - 2.24% for HUSKY C
    - 1.87% for HUSKY D
  - Statin Adherence 80%:
    - 13.92% for HUSKY A and B
    - 2.92% for HUSKY C
    - 9.75% for HUSKY D
- Increased the Diabetes Monitoring for People with Diabetes and Schizophrenia rate by:
  - 26.65% for HUSKY A and B
- Decreased the diabetes long-term complications admission rate for members:
  - Ages 18 to 64 per 100,000 MM by 4.82%
  - Ages 65 and older per 100,000 MM by 54.05%

### ***Asthma Control Outcomes***

- Decreased asthma inpatient admissions per 1,000 MM by 21.80%
- Decreased asthma in younger adults admission rate (ages 18 to 39) per 100,000 MM by 9.30%
- Decreased asthma emergency department visits (ages 2 to 20) by 4.44%
- Decrease COPD or asthma in older adults admission rate (ages 18 and older) per 100,000 MM by 3.60%
- Increased the Medication Management for People with Asthma- Total Medication

Compliance 75% rate by:

- 14.08% for HUSKY A and B
- 8.31% for HUSKY C
- 13.16% for HUSKY D
- Increased the Asthma Medication Ratio Total rate by:
  - 5.03% for HUSKY A and B
  - 1.51% for HUSKY C
  - 6.02% for HUSKY D

#### ❖ *Medical ICM Program Satisfaction*

- Achieved a 94.5% overall favorable rating by members surveyed for satisfaction with the ICM program
- Achieved a 97.19% overall favorable rating by members surveyed for satisfaction after completion of a call with the CHNCT Member Engagement Services call center
- Achieved an 85.6% overall favorable rating by providers surveyed for satisfaction with various aspects of the HUSKY Health program
- Among those providers that worked with the ICM department, 95.0% were satisfied with the ICM program when surveyed through the Provider Satisfaction survey

#### ❖ *Person-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Program Satisfaction*

- Achieved an overall member satisfaction rating of 94.6% among adults and 97.4% on behalf of children

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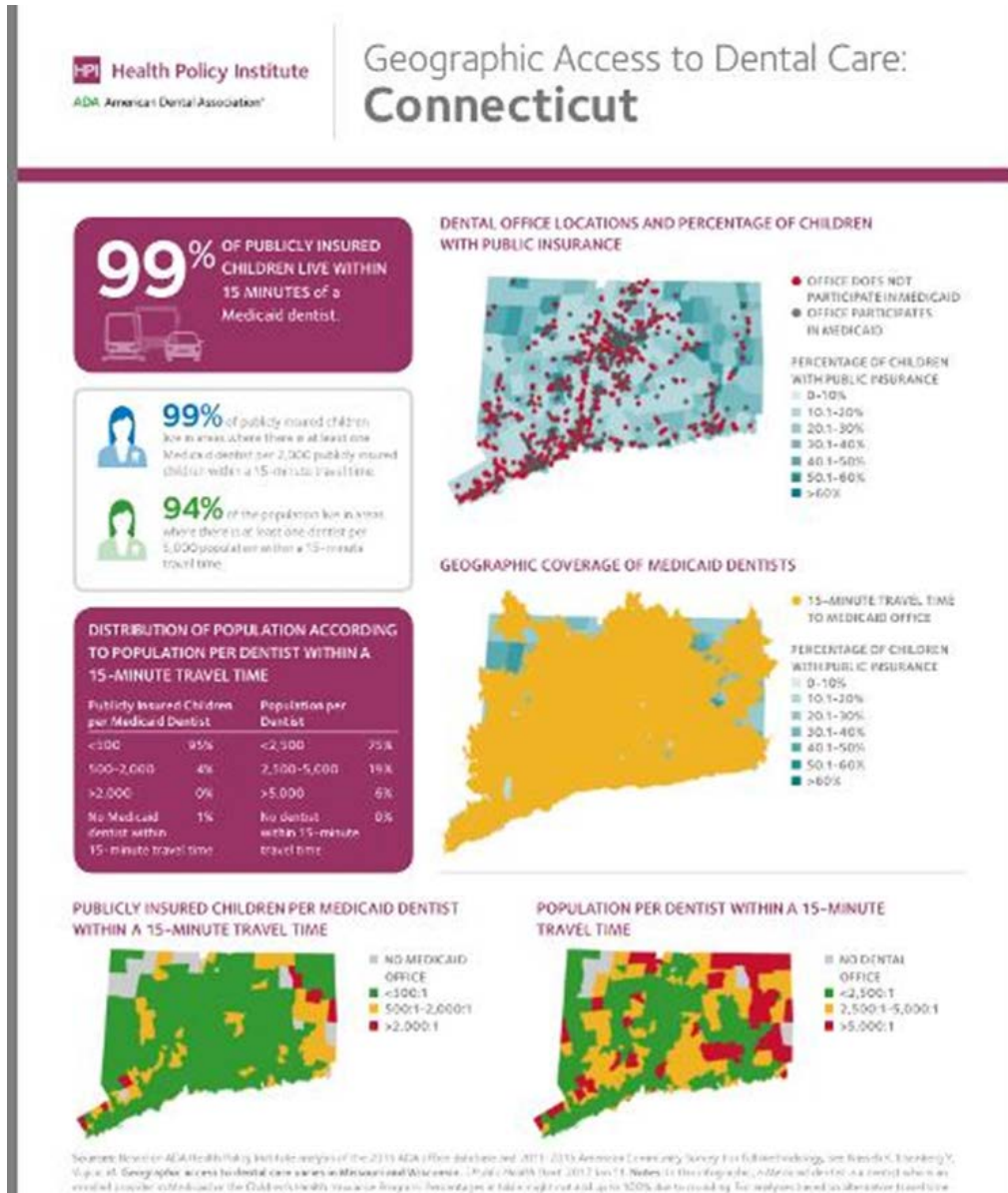
#### ❖ *National Recognition of Connecticut Medicaid*

##### **American Dental Association Health Policy Institute Analysis**

In June 2017, the American Dental Association's Health Policy Institute (HPI) released new data on dentist reimbursement in Medicaid for every state, comparing physicians' and dentists' reimbursement rates within each state. This information was presented via two national webinars on which the DSS lead staff person for dental was a panelist. HPI has also released a state-by-state analysis of access to dental care. The method that was used to review access was based on how we do this in Connecticut. HPI has recognized the CTDHP for its access analysis, and has also identified CTDHP's administrative and quality management processes as best practices.

The network analysis specifically addresses the Medicaid population, and assesses the number of providers to members based on geographic location and travel distance. What distinguishes the analysis from past efforts is that it utilizes each state's road network to estimate beneficiaries' travel time to provider offices - a real world way to examine access by provider type. Connecticut ranked number one in access, to dental providers with 98% of the population having a dentist available within 15 miles. Texas ranked second with 96%, followed by Wisconsin and North Dakota, trailing a combined fourth, with rates of

60%.



Infographics for all states are available at this link: [www.ada.org/hpi](http://www.ada.org/hpi)

**Health Affairs Article on Cost Trends**

A June 2017 article featured in the journal *Health Affairs* included an important cross-state comparison of Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance cost trends. A key take-away from the paper is that over the period from 2010 to 2014, the per-enrollee cost trend in

Medicaid was *lower* than in both Medicare and private health coverage. And within Medicaid, Connecticut is reported as having reduced its per-person spending by a greater percentage (5.7%) than any other state in the country. See this link for more detail: [www.ct.gov/dss/lib/dss/pdfs/ConnecticutMedicaidLeadsTheWayAsNationalMedicaid.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dss/lib/dss/pdfs/ConnecticutMedicaidLeadsTheWayAsNationalMedicaid.pdf)

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## **Access to Primary, Preventative Medical Care**

### **❖ *Person-Centered Medical Homes (PCMH)***

The department implemented its PCMH initiative on January 1, 2012, and further developed it over SFY 2017. The premise of a PCMH is that it enables primary care practitioners to bring a holistic, person-centered approach to supporting the needs of patients, while reducing barriers to access (e.g., limited office hours) that have inhibited people from effectively using such care.

Through this effort, the department is investing significant resources to help primary care practices obtain PCMH recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance. Practices on the “glide path” toward recognition receive technical assistance from CHNCT. Practices that have received recognition are eligible for financial incentives including enhanced fee-for-service payments and retrospective payments for meeting benchmarks on identified quality measures. Practices on the glide path also receive prorated enhanced fee-for-service payments based upon their progress on the glide path but are not eligible for quality payments at this time. Key features of practice transformation include embedding limited medical care coordination functions within primary care practices, capacity for non-face-to-face and after hours support for patients, and use of interoperable electronic health records.

As of June, 2017, a total of 111 practices were participating (reflecting 475 sites and 1,647 providers). These practices were supporting 349,735 Medicaid beneficiaries.

### **❖ *Electronic Health Records (EHR)***

Another important aspect of enhancing the capacity of primary care is financial support for adoption of EHR. EHR support more person-centered care and reduce duplication of effort across providers. DSS is collaborating with UConn Health Center to administer a Medicaid EHR Incentive Program and to improve outreach and education to providers.

### **❖ *Health Equity Work***

DSS, CHNCT, and Beacon are currently examining access barriers related to gender, race and ethnicity faced by Medicaid beneficiaries. This project is focused on identifying disparities and equipping primary care practices and behavioral health providers with a toolkit outlining strategies to reduce these barriers. DSS is also continuing to partner with the federal Office of Minority Health on various efforts to



improve the health of racial and ethnic populations through the development of policy and programming designed to eliminate disparities.

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### **Medicaid Integration Initiatives**

Many Medicaid beneficiaries, especially those who are dually eligible for Medicare, have complex health profiles. A high incidence of beneficiaries have co-morbid physical and behavioral health conditions, and need support in developing goal-oriented, person-centered plans of care that are realistic and incorporate chronic disease self-management strategies.

A siloed approach to care for a recipient's medical **and** behavioral health needs is unlikely to effectively care for either set of needs. For example, a client with depression and a chronic illness such as diabetes is unlikely to be able to manage either diabetes or depression without effectively addressing both conditions. Further, many such individuals also require long-term services and supports. All of these facets must effectively be coordinated in order to achieve improved outcomes.

#### *❖ Health Homes for Individuals with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness*

DSS worked with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to implement health homes for individuals who are diagnosed with an identified Serious and Persistent Mental Illness, have high expenditures, and are served by a local Mental Health Authority.

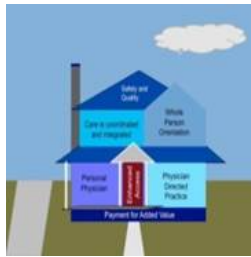
This model is making per-member/per-month payments to mental health authorities that permit them to incorporate Advanced Practice Registered Nurses within their existing models of behavioral health support. Health homes were launched in Fall, 2015.

#### *❖ PCMH+*

A key achievement in the development of value-based payment approaches is that, effective January 1, 2017, DSS launched an upside-only shared savings initiative called PCMH+ in which seven Federally Qualified Health Centers and two Accountable Care Organizations are participating. PCMH+ represents an opportunity for Connecticut Medicaid to build on, but not supplant, its existing and successful Person-Centered Medical Home initiative, through which over 44% of members are being served.

PCMH+ incorporating new requirements for care coordination, focusing upon integration of behavioral and physical health care, children with special health care needs, health equity, and competency in care for individuals with disabilities. It also represents the Department's first use of an upside-only "shared savings" approach, under which participating providers that meet specified quality standards and generate savings for Medicaid will receive a portion of the savings that are achieved. Participating FQHCs are also receiving a monthly care coordination add-on payment.





Person-Centered  
Medical Homes



Community-based  
care coordination through  
expanded care team



“Upside-only”  
arrangements in which  
providers that meet  
health and satisfaction  
measures and produce  
savings share in a  
portion of those savings,  
but do not absorb losses

The department’s goal with PCMH+, which is a component of the State Innovation Model (SIM) Model Test Grant initiative, is to continue to improve health and satisfaction outcomes for Medicaid members currently being served by FQHCs and “advanced networks,” which were competitively selected by the department via a request for proposals. Both FQHCs and certain ACOs provide a significant amount of primary care to Medicaid members.

PCMH+ expands on Connecticut Medicaid’s existing and successful Person-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) initiative, and Intensive Care Management (ICM) initiatives. Connecticut’s Medicaid PCMH model is a strong premise from which to start in that PCMH practices have demonstrated year over year improvement on a range of quality measures (e.g. adolescent well care, ambulatory ED visits, asthma ED visits, LDL screening, readmissions, well child visits) and also have received high scores on such elements as overall member satisfaction, access to care, and courtesy and respect. Connecticut Medicaid’s ICM initiative has also demonstrated exciting results.

While PCMH remains the foundation of care delivery transformation, PCMH+ is building on current efforts by incorporating new requirements related to integration of primary care and behavioral health care, as well as linkages to the types of community supports that can assist beneficiaries in utilizing their Medicaid benefits. Typical barriers that inhibit the use of Medicaid benefits include housing instability, food insecurity, lack of personal safety, limited office hours at medical practices, chronic conditions, and lack of literacy. Enabling connections to organizations that can support beneficiaries in resolving these access barriers will further the Department’s interests in preventative health. Further, partnering with providers on this will begin to re-shape the paradigm for care coordination in a direction that will support population health goals for individuals who

face the challenges of substance abuse and behavioral health, limited educational attainment, poverty, homelessness, and exposure to neighborhood violence.

❖ *PIOHQI Grant*

In 2013 Connecticut was chosen as one of only four states awarded a Health Resources Services Administration Grant for Perinatal & Infant Oral Health Quality Improvement (PIOHQI), focused on oral health improvement and community integration strategies. The long-term goal of the grant is to achieve sustainable improvement in the oral health care status of the ‘Maternal Child Health’ (MCH) population. Documentation of successful outcomes and lessons learned will be applied to the development of a national strategic framework for the purpose of replicating effective and efficient approaches to serving the oral health care needs of this targeted MCH population.

Now in its fourth and final grant year, the PIOHQI pilot expanded an existing intensive community outreach program to include oral health for perinatal women and infants. The initiative has expanded in its three years and the beginning of its fourth grant year to cover fourteen areas of the state that represent 80% of the HUSKY Health births in Connecticut.

Under the grant there has been significant progress in the use of the Access to Baby Care (ABC) program that encourages pediatric Primary Care Physicians (PCP's) to perform oral assessments and to apply fluoride varnish to the teeth of patients aged three and under, when indicated. Fluoride varnish applications by pediatric PCP's increased 202% from 2013 to 2015 and the number of providers applying fluoride varnish grew by 69% in the same period.

Early evaluative review showed that perinatal dental utilization increased from 28% in 2005 before CTDHP began to almost 50% in 2010 using a similar but less focused approach. Dental utilization for children under the age of three in HUSKY Health has also continued to increase significantly. Preliminary trend data demonstrates an approximate 11.3% reduction in the overall need for dental treatment among the population of children who receive oral health services delivered through a primary care provider and obtain timely preventive dental care.

Dental Service Federal Fiscal Year 17	Age Group <1	Age Group 1-2	Age Group 3-5
Preventive Dental Care Delivered by Dentist	2.35%	42.83%	68.64%
Oral Health Service Delivered by Primary Care Provider	9.46%	57.92%	72.67%

### *❖ Quality Assurance and Improvement*

According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), quality improvement (QI) is an essential part of healthcare delivery systems. The unique structure of Connecticut Medicaid (self-insured ASO model) allows for the systematic and continuous actions that lead to measurable improvement in health care services and the health status of targeted patient populations. Quality improvement is the degree to which health services for individuals and populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional standards of care. This is described above and illustrated by the initiatives undertaken by the ASOs to improve outcomes for Medicaid beneficiaries.

As the Department embraces the concept of value-based care, the three aims of Quality Improvement initiatives - improving the patient care experience, improving the population's health and reducing healthcare costs - are essential. Quality Improvement is especially important to our state Medicaid initiatives, as we are uniquely positioned to serve as a model for other states who may want to move towards using Administrative Services Organizations to achieve these goals while experiencing an overall reduction in the per member per month cost over time.

In 2017, a Quality Improvement Committee convened to begin standardizing processes across common tasks among the ASOs and programs offered by the Department. The Quality Improvement Committee will be linking projects that share commonalities, including initiatives related to adverse childhood events (ACES), opioid addiction and chronic health conditions.

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### **'Rebalancing' of Long-Term Services and Supports**

Consumers overwhelmingly wish to have meaningful choice in how they receive needed long-term services and supports. Connecticut's Medicaid spending remains weighted towards institutional settings, but re-balancing is shifting this. In SFY 2017, 61% of long-term care clients received care in the community, but only 49% of long-term service and support spending supported home and community-based care. Further, only 7% of the Medicaid population receives long-term services and supports but 37% (\$1.934 billion) of the SFY 2014 Medicaid expenditures (\$6.1 billion) were made on the behalf of these beneficiaries.

### *❖ Strategic Plan to Rebalance Long-Term Services and Supports*

In January 2013, the Governor, the Office of Policy and Management and the Department of Social Services Commissioner released an updated copy of the State's Strategic Plan to Rebalance Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS). This plan details diverse elements of a broad agenda that is designed to support older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers in choice of their preferred means, mode and place in which to receive long-term services and supports. Key aspects of the plan include 1) continued support for Money Follows the Person; 2) State Balancing Incentive Payments Program activities; 3) nursing

home diversification; and 4) launch of a new web-based hub called ‘My Place CT’ ([www.myplacect.org](http://www.myplacect.org)). The strategic plan identifies ‘hot spots’ for development of services, including medical services, since it projects demand attributed to the aging population at a town level. For more information, please visit [www.ct.gov/dss/rebal](http://www.ct.gov/dss/rebal).

#### ❖ *Money Follows the Person*

The Money Follows the Person (MFP) initiative that has led efforts toward systems change in long-term services and supports key MFP demonstration services include: care planning specialized in engagement and motivation strategies, alcohol and substance abuse intervention, peer support, informal care giver support, assistive technology, fall prevention, recovery assistance, housing coordination, self-directed transitional budgets including housing set-up, transportation assistance and housing modifications. Systems focus areas for MFP include housing development, workforce development, LTSS service and systems gap analysis/recommendations and hospital discharge planning interventions. An additional key aspect of the demonstration is the development of improved LTSS quality management systems.

Over SFY 2017, the Money Follows the Person program supported 742 individuals in transitioning from nursing facilities to the community. Of these, 709 received enhanced match; 304 of these were elders, 324 had physical disabilities, 37 had mental health disabilities and 44 had intellectual disabilities. Since implementation in December 2008, there have been over 4589 transitions, of which 4,284 received enhanced federal financial participation. Out of this total, 1,978 were elders, 1,755 had physical disabilities, 318 had mental health disabilities and 233 had an intellectual disability. MFP has enabled a broad array of individuals to live independently and to receive needed supports including accessible housing and home and community-based services. For more information, please visit [www.ct.gov/dss/moneyfollowstheperson](http://www.ct.gov/dss/moneyfollowstheperson).

#### ❖ *State Balancing Incentive Payments Program*

Further, MFP led efforts to submit an application to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services under the State Balancing Incentive Payments Program. Connecticut received confirmation in fall 2012 of a \$72.8 million award. In July 2015, Connecticut received an additional performance-related award of \$4.2 million. Key aspects of the BIP awards include development of:

- A pre-screen and a common comprehensive assessment for all persons entering the long-term services and supports system, regardless of entry point. It is anticipated that medical offices, various state agencies administering waivers, and the ASOs will all utilize the same tool so that the people served by the state’s systems won’t be continually asked the same question unless there is a status change. The anticipated result is a more efficient system where information is shared and unnecessary duplication is eliminated. During SFY 17, the assessment was improved to refine levels of need and efficiency of the tool. All involved agencies

- have agreed to use a common assessment, and it is currently being piloted.
- A conflict-free case management across the system.
- A ‘no-wrong door’ system for access in long-term services and supports.

Phase one of the state’s ‘no wrong door’ was launched in 2013. The web-based platform was branded My Place CT and aims to coordinate seamlessly with both ConneCT and the health insurance exchange over the next two years. The Department submitted an Advance Planning Document to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that outlines the funding and information technology architecture required to support the coordination effort.

To realize the My Place CT vision of in-person help at various community entry points, the Department initiated the Care Through Community Partner network of trusted places where consumers could access online resources and receive in-person assistance with information and referral. During 2017 the Department awarded mini grants to towns and organizations to provide a higher level of navigation to their residents. Recruitment of senior centers, libraries, providers and others into the network continues. This network includes outreach and grass-roots communication at places where consumers already go, like pharmacies, hairdressers and doctors’ offices. Town level grantees work with the Department to develop a community level concept that is intended to roll out statewide in SFY 18.

In SFY2017 phase one of the web-based system that supports electronic referrals to both formal long-term services and supports, and to local community services and supports was implemented. Town level asset maps were created as well as common indexing to facilitate electronic search functions. Work was coordinated with the United Way 2-1-1 which supports a 24 hour chat function. It is anticipated that this support will be especially helpful to hospital discharge planners and others seeking streamlined, automated coordination assistance.

Further, the Department implemented the second workforce development campaign and developed messaging and concepts to reach out to potential professionals, leading them to a new mini-website. DSS also partnered with the CT Department of Labor to make the new DOL CTHires website the hub for both jobseekers and those looking for help.

Additional information about [www.MyPlaceCT.org](http://www.MyPlaceCT.org) is detailed below.

### ❖ *My Place CT*

The rebalancing plan emphasizes the need to enable consumers, caregivers and providers to access timely and accurate information with which to make decisions, means of connecting with services (both health-related and social services), and a clearinghouse through which formal and informal caregivers can find opportunities to provide assistance. In support of this, the department launched [www.myplacect.org](http://www.myplacect.org) in June 2013. The site focused on two key areas: 1) workforce development - helping people who are entering or re-entering the workforce to understand what types of caregiving jobs are available, to list positions and to provide contacts. 2) Consumer education – helping older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers plan and manage in-home care and support. Two statewide outreach

campaigns started creating awareness of the need for in-home support professionals and educated consumers about the resources available on MyPlaceCT.org.

During SFY 2017, My Place CT continued to evolve in partnership with 2-1-1 Infoline and added an online chat feature on the website. The new MyPlaceCT website was launched supporting enhanced interoperability with the 2-1-1 site, training materials for community partners and the public, a mobile application and a new design that facilitates users' ability to create and save individualized packages of services. To date, the new site has had more than 15 million gross impressions.

#### ❖ *Community First Choice*

Launched in July 2015, CFC is an entitlement made possible by the Affordable Care Act. The program enables Medicaid beneficiaries who require nursing facility or other institutional level of care to self-direct home- and community-based services under individual budgets, with the support of a fiscal intermediary. Services include (as applicable) personal care attendants to assist with hands on care, cueing and/or supervision. Additional supports and services include, home delivered meals, support and planning coach, health coaches, emergency backup systems, assistive technology, environmental accessibility modifications and costs associated with transitioning from institutions. During SFY 17 approximately 1,000 Medicaid members accessed services through this new self-directed model.

#### ❖ *Nursing Home Diversification*

Another important feature of rebalancing is use of a request for proposals process and an associated \$40 million in grant and bond funds through SFY 2017 to seek proposals from nursing facilities interested in diversifying their scope to include home-and-community-based services. Undergirding this effort is town-level projections of need for long-term service and supports, associated workforce and a requirement that applicant nursing facilities work collaboratively with the town in which they are located to tailor services to local need. During SFY 2015, the department awarded funds to four additional nursing homes, total of eleven proposals awarded since SFY 2014, seeking to diversify their business models. Of the eleven awarded, six moved forward to funding of the proposals. Two of the six nursing facilities were awarded nine month planning grants that have been completed and resulted in sustainable community based diversified business plans. During SFY 17 two grantees received no cost extensions to continue implementation of activities. The department may release another RFP in late calendar 2017 with available funding in the amount of \$25 million.

#### ❖ *Medicaid Waiver services*

Connecticut is continuing to streamline and improve access to its Medicaid 'waiver' coverage. Waivers enable states to be excused from certain federal Medicaid rules and to cover home and community-based long-term services and supports using Medicaid funds. Existing waivers enable services to older adults, individuals with physical disabilities,



individuals with behavioral health conditions, children with complex medical profiles, individuals with intellectual disabilities, children with autism spectrum disorder and individuals with acquired brain injury. The Department administers 11 Medicaid waiver programs, three of which are operated by the Department of Developmental Services and one of which is operated by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The centralized waiver eligibility hub established in SFY 2015 continued to improve support for consumers and timeliness in approving waiver applications. Further, over the course of spring of 2015, administration of the ABI waivers was transferred from the DSS Social Work Unit to the Division of Health Services Home and Community-Based Services Unit, which already oversees the elder, Personal Care Assistant, and Katie Beckett waivers. In July of 2016, the Department assumed responsibility for the direct operation of the Early Childhood and Lifespan Autism Waivers. The Early Childhood waiver is being phased out as the services under the waiver are now available under the Medicaid state plan. For more information, please visit [www.ct.gov/dss/hcbs](http://www.ct.gov/dss/hcbs).

❖ *Pre-admission Screening*

The Department utilizes a web-based system for the federally mandated Pre-admission Screening Resident Review program. The system identifies persons who are in need of both long-term and short-term institutional care, and recommends alternatives to those whose preference is for home and community-based services options.

❖ *Electronic Visit Verification*

Beginning January 1, 2017, the Department implemented Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) home services provided to waiver participants. On April 3, 2017, the Department added the requirement to home health services for waiver participants. EVV furthers the interests of persons receiving care at home, the caregivers and the administration, legislature and taxpaying public. EVV ensures accountability by documenting that the services for which DSS receives claims were actually provided.

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**Escalation Unit at Central Office -- Customer Service Enhancement**

Launched as a pilot initiative by Commissioner Roderick Bremby in 2014, the Escalation Unit continued customer trouble-shooting and issue resolution operations over SFY 2017. The Escalation Unit is in the unique position of functioning as both a processing center and benefits center. As such, staff are able to address client-specific inquiries received at DSS central administration, many of which originate with client advocates, service delivery partners and executive and legislative branches of government. The Escalation Unit staff is also directly available to the **Office of the Healthcare Advocate**, the **Department on Aging, Area Agencies on Aging/Choices**, **Community Health Network of Connecticut**, **Office of Policy Management** and **Office of Victim Services** in bringing about resolution to the noted client inquiries and concerns.

For SFY 2017, cases included urgent requests for medical care access and food assistance. The unit also supports field office and other central office units in fielding and addressing customer service cases. Highly experienced in eligibility services, unit members also track and monitor

all inquiries received by unit staff using a Client Information Tracking System developed for the EU. Part of the Division of Eligibility Policy & Economic Security, the Escalation Unit is highly invested in providing the residents of Connecticut the best experience possible in eligibility determination and issue resolution with respect to DSS services.

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### **Pre-Release Entitlement Unit – Helping to Address Recidivism**

This is a successful collaborative between DSS, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Department of Correction, University of Connecticut and various community partners. Unit staff facilitate the transition of individuals from correctional facilities to the community by ensuring the availability of medical assistance upon their release, contributing to a decline in the inmate recidivism rate. This medical assistance is critical to provide these individuals with medication and medical services necessary to safely maintain them in the community. Staff also provide technical assistance regarding departmental programs and procedures to participating agencies.

The project includes a collaborative initiative with the Connecticut Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division to expedite determination of eligibility for persons sentenced to a term of probation. The initiative also encompasses populations making the transition from psychiatric institutions to nursing homes. Staff also have facilitated the suspension of Medicaid benefits for certain eligible clients who were active on Medicaid when held in custody by the Department of Correction to help program participants experience fewer barriers to medical care upon release from custody.

The Pre-Release Entitlement Unit is part of the Division of Eligibility Services and Economic Security.

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### **Child Support Services – For Children and Taxpayers**

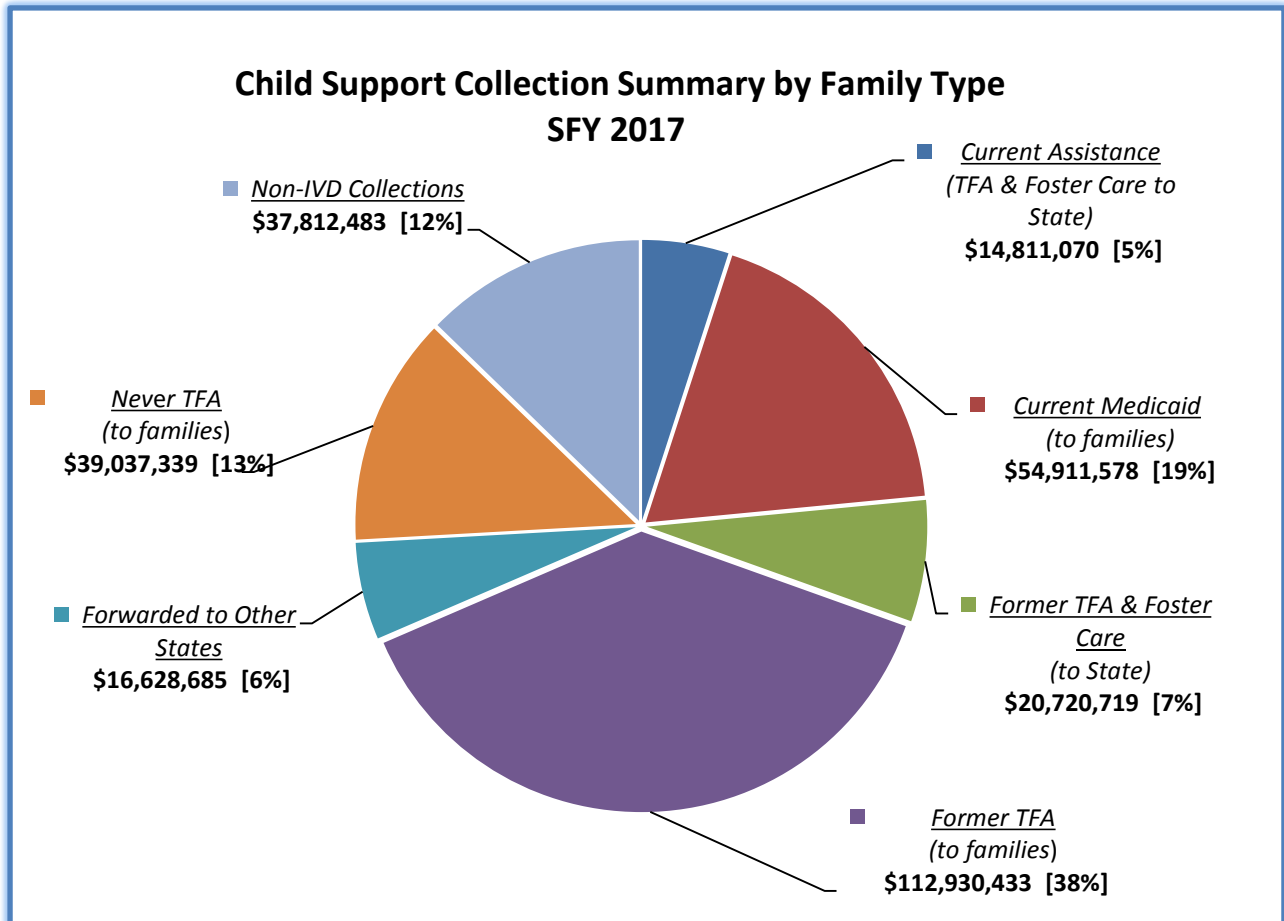
The Office of Child Support Services collected nearly \$296.8 million in court-ordered child support during SFY 2017. The program sent \$206.9 million in parental support to children whose families are not receiving state cash assistance benefits. Another \$16.6 million went to children living out of state.

At the same time, state taxpayers benefited from approximately \$14.8 million in child support collected from parents of Connecticut children receiving Temporary Family Assistance. Most of this amount goes back to the state as reimbursement for public assistance benefits. Another \$20.7 million was collected on past-due amounts and kept by the state in lieu of current or past public assistance benefits.

At the end of federal fiscal year 2017 (9/30/17), the child support caseload was 166,495. More than eight and one half percent (8.67%) of these cases are current assistance (active cash assistance – support assigned to the state); 57.4% are former assistance (payments to the family);



and 33.93% are never assistance cases (payments to the family). Some 91.1% of the caseload has a court order for support and/or health care coverage in place.



***Child Support Federal Performance Standard: Self-Assessment Review***

Connecticut has met or exceeded the federal performance requirements for every review criterion during this year’s evaluation, demonstrating a combined compliance average of 95%, which is well above the federal benchmark of 75%.

***Administrative Enforcement***

The DSS Office of Child Support Services oversees a number of administrative (non-judicial) enforcement remedies that have historically reinforced overall program collections. Remedies include: IRS and state tax offset; real estate liens; personal property liens (civil suits, workers comp, inheritance, and insurance settlements); collection of unclaimed property held by the Office of the State Treasurer; reporting delinquent obligors to consumer reporting agencies; bankruptcy collections; seizure of bank account assets and lottery winnings, and passport

denial. During SFY 2017, the Office of Child Support Services Administrative Unit collected nearly \$36.6 million in child support for families and the State of Connecticut.

## MAJOR PROGRAM AND SERVICE AREAS

### *Medical and Health Care Services*

The Division of Health Services and Field Operations staff statewide helps eligible children, youth, adults, and elders access needed health coverage through Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program, and other programs. Connecticut's HUSKY Health Plan combines services under Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program for children, teenagers, pregnant women, parents/caregivers, individuals who are aged, blind or disabled, and low income adults.

Supporting the delivery of medical coverage services to DSS clients are the Division of Eligibility Policy and Economic Security; the Division of Social Work Services; and Office of Public Affairs. DSS works with Access Health CT, Connecticut's health insurance exchange/marketplace, to provide health coverage, pursuant to the Affordable Care Act.

**HUSKY Health** ([www.huskyhealth.com](http://www.huskyhealth.com) or 1-877-CT-HUSKY) offers health coverage to



Connecticut children and families, individuals who are aged, blind or disabled, and low income adults. The program has four parts: HUSKY A (children, parents/relative caregiver, and pregnant women), HUSKY B (Children's Health Insurance Program), HUSKY C (aged, blind or with disability), and HUSKY D (low-income adults under age 65 and without dependent children).

At the midpoint of SFY 2017, 756,320 individuals were receiving coverage in the HUSKY Health Medicaid areas (HUSKY A, C and D); and another 16,705 in the Children's Health Insurance Program (HUSKY B).

#### **HUSKY A and HUSKY B**

Connecticut children and their parents or a relative caregiver; and pregnant women may be eligible for HUSKY A (Medicaid), depending on family income. A total of 454,580 individuals were receiving medical coverage through HUSKY A at the midpoint of SFY 2017.

Uninsured children under age 19 in higher-income households may be eligible for HUSKY B (non-Medicaid Children's Health Insurance Program). Depending on specific income level, family cost-sharing applies. A total of 16,705 children were participating in the program at the midpoint of SFY 2017.

#### **HUSKY C**

Connecticut residents aged 65 or older, or who are aged 18 through 64 and who are blind or who have another disability, may qualify for coverage under HUSKY C (also known as Medicaid for the Aged/Blind/Disabled, or Title 19). There are income and asset limits to qualify for this program. Net income limits (after deductions) vary by geographic area in Connecticut.

Monthly Amount:

	REGION A (Southwestern CT)	REGIONS B & C (Northern, Eastern & Western CT)
Single Person	<b>\$ 633.49</b>	<b>\$523.38</b>
Married Couple	<b>\$ 805.09</b>	<b>\$ 696.41</b>

Institutionalized Individuals  
Single Person \$2,205

Asset limits are as follows:  
Single person - \$1,600  
Married couple - \$2,400

The HUSKY C program continued to serve 92,256 low-income elders and adults with disabilities, including about 16,000 residents in nursing homes at the midpoint of SFY 2017.

### **HUSKY D**

With federal approval in SFY 2010, DSS transferred its State-Administered General Assistance medical coverage beneficiaries to the Medicaid for Low-Income Adults program (HUSKY D). Connecticut was the first state in the nation to receive federal approval to expand Medicaid Affordable Care Act. The HUSKY D program serves low-income adults aged 19 through 64 who do not qualify for Medicare, are not pregnant, and do not have dependent children. Effective January 1, 2014, under the Affordable Health Care Act, income eligibility limits for this program expanded to 138% of the federal poverty level. A total of 209,484 Connecticut residents were being served under HUSKY D at the midpoint of SFY 2017.

The income limits to qualify for this program are listed below.

Monthly Amount:

Single Person	<b>\$ 1,386.90</b>
Married Couple	<b>\$ 1,867.14</b>

For more information please visit [www.huskyhealth.com](http://www.huskyhealth.com).

### **Medicare Savings Programs**

A change in state law made it possible to make changes in the Medicare Savings Programs (MSP), which help many eligible Connecticut residents pay Medicare Part B premiums, deductibles and co-insurance. Specifically, the state raised the income-eligibility limits and eliminated the asset reporting requirement. Beneficiaries can earn up to \$2,472.30 for a single person and \$3,328.38 for a couple to qualify for one of the Medicare Savings Programs. Once enrolled, consumers qualify for federal Low-Income Subsidy prescription drug benefits for their Medicare Part D. The department pays for Medicare Part B premiums (\$96.40-\$121.80) per

month), covered by the state. At the midpoint of SFY 2017, the department served 162,445 individuals through the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary program, including assistance through the Specified Low- Income Medicare Beneficiary and Additional Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary programs. For further information please go to [www.ct.gov/dss/medicaresavingsprograms](http://www.ct.gov/dss/medicaresavingsprograms).

**The Connecticut AIDS Drug Assistance Program (CADAP)** pays for drugs determined by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (UFDA) to support individuals with AIDS/HIV. The Connecticut Department of Public Health determines which of these UFDA drugs become part of the CADAP formulary. To be eligible for the program, an applicant must be a Connecticut resident, have a physician certification, must not be a recipient of Medicaid, and must have net countable income within 400% of the federal poverty level. In addition, the individual must apply for Medicaid within two weeks of approval for this program. CADAP coordinates benefits with Medicare Part D and other third party coverage to ensure that CADAP is payer of last resort. There were 1,654 individuals enrolled in the program at the midpoint of SFY 2017. For further information, please visit [www.ct.gov/dss/cadap](http://www.ct.gov/dss/cadap).

**MED-Connect, or Medicaid for Employees with Disabilities** ([www.ct.gov/med](http://www.ct.gov/med)) enables people with disabilities to become and stay employed without risking eligibility for medical coverage.

A total of 5,113 individuals with disabilities in Connecticut's workforce receive Medicaid coverage through this program. Enrollees may have income up to \$75,000 per year. Some participants are charged a premium (10% of their income in excess of 200 percent of the federal poverty level). Liquid assets may not exceed \$10,000 for a single person or \$15,000 for a couple.



**The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders**

(CHCPE; [www.ct.gov/dss/chcpe](http://www.ct.gov/dss/chcpe)) is a comprehensive home care program designed to enable older persons at risk of institutionalization to receive the support services they need to remain living at their home.

The CHCPE provides a wide range of home health and non-medical services to persons age 65 and older who are institutionalized or at risk of institutionalization. The program serves approximately 16,500 older adults statewide. Available services include adult day health, homemaker, companion, chore, home delivered meals, emergency response systems, care management, home health, assisted living, personal care assistant, assistive technology, mental health counseling, chronic disease self-management programs, recovery assistant, bill payer, care transitions and minor home modification services. The individual must meet the income and asset limits to be eligible for the program.

The program has a multi-tiered structure through which individuals can receive home care services in amounts corresponding to their financial eligibility and functional dependence. Two categories within the program are funded primarily with state funds; the third category is funded under a Medicaid waiver. An additional category was added in February 2012 under the 1915(i)

state plan home and community based services option. This option serves individuals who are categorically eligible for Medicaid, are less than nursing home level of care and whose services would otherwise have been one hundred percent state funded. Under this option, the state can claim the federal match on the participants' home and community based services. Persons receiving services under the state funded portion of the program are required to pay a copay for the services they receive.

**Connecticut Home Care Program for Adults with Disabilities (CHCPD)** was created in 2007, through Public Act 07-02. This program serves people ages 18-64 who are in need of home and community based services to assist them to remain in the community. The program grew out of advocacy efforts by the Multiple Sclerosis Society. This program is state funded and is not for individuals with Medicaid. Originally, the program served 50 participants but effective July 1, 2014, that number was doubled to 100.

Prospective clients are referred by community home-health agencies, hospitals and nursing facilities. Interested people can call the program directly at 1-800-445-5394. During SFY 2014, the unit added a web-based application and individuals can access the application at [www.ascendami.com/ctomecareforelders/default/](http://www.ascendami.com/ctomecareforelders/default/).

Individuals who meet both the financial and functional criteria are referred for an independent, comprehensive assessment. This assessment determines the prospective client's needs and whether a plan of care can be developed which will safely and cost-effectively meet those needs in the community.

**Katie Beckett Waiver** serves children and young adults up to the age 22 who have physical disabilities. The waiver provides nursing care management services to children and their families and supports their efforts to keep the child in the family home with community-based services and supports. The waiver had served up to 203 individuals but as of July 1, 2014, 100 new slots were added to the program as a result of budget action by Governor Malloy and the General Assembly. Currently the waiver has 300 enrollees. Over SFY 2015, the Department supported applicants in accessing all of these new slots.

**Lifespan Autism Waiver** serves persons who are at least 3 years of age with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder who live in a family or caregiver's, or their own, home. Although these individuals do not have a diagnosis of intellectual disability, they have substantial functional limitations that negatively impact their ability to live independently. These individuals and their caregivers need flexible and necessary supports and services to live safe and productive lives. This waiver is currently capped at \$60,000 annually to change to \$50,000 annually with the upcoming Waiver renewal.

Waiver services are provided face to face, in the participant's home or in other community settings. An individualized assessment, individual service plan development, and service delivery emphasize participant strengths and assets, utilization of natural supports and community integration.

**Acquired Brain Injury Waivers 1 and 2** provide a broad range of services to persons with acquired brain injuries. The waivers have a rehabilitative focus and are currently serving 570

persons. The waiver targets individuals who, without services, would require the services provided in a nursing home, a subacute facility, and ICF/IID or a chronic disease hospital. Care managers, utilizing a person centered approach, develop service plans and monitor effectiveness within the model of a care team.

**Personal Care Assistant Waiver** provides services to persons 18-64 with physical care needs who would otherwise need nursing facility care. Services offered include care management, independent support broker and adult family living. Waiver participants typically receive personal care assistant services through the Community First Choice State Plan option. 970 persons are currently being served under this waiver.

For information about Medicaid waiver programs, please visit [www.ct.gov/dss/medicaidwaiveroverview](http://www.ct.gov/dss/medicaidwaiveroverview).

**ConnTRANS** (Connecticut Organ Transplant Fund; [www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss), search term 'ConnTRANS'): ConnTRANS is a non-entitlement program supported by donations from taxpayers who earmark a part of their state tax refund, assisting donors, pre and post-transplant patients when their expenses are not covered by another source. Applications and questions may be directed to the Eligibility Policy and Program Support Division by contacting 860-424-5250.

**Medical Coverage for Children at DCF** ([www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss), search term 'Family Services'): provides medical benefits for children cared for by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). At the midpoint of SFY 2017, HUSKY A coverage was provided to approximately 8,200 children in DCF foster care and 5,131 children in subsidized adoption care. An additional 664 youths transitioning from DCF care on their 18th birthday were granted coverage until the age of 21. Due to the implementation of the Affordable Health Care Act, youth transitioning from DCF care on their 18th birthday can now receive medical coverage until the age of 26. The Department of Social Services currently maintains approximately 670 medical cases in this category. Medical benefits were also granted for 2,188 children in subsidized guardianship.

**The Connecticut Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program** is a comprehensive screening program available throughout Connecticut for medically underserved women. The primary objective of the program is to significantly increase the number of women who receive breast and cervical cancer screening, diagnostic and treatment referral services. Medical coverage is also available for eligible adults. All services are offered free of charge through the Connecticut Department of Public Health's contracted health care providers located statewide. Department of Social Services currently maintains 470 cases for this coverage group in Medicaid. For more information please visit [www.ct.gov/dss/bcc](http://www.ct.gov/dss/bcc).

**Tuberculosis Medicaid Coverage:** Provides Medicaid coverage for patients who are not otherwise eligible while they are being evaluated or treated for TB disease and infection including medication. The department currently maintains 94 cases for this coverage group.

**Family Planning Services** ([www.huskyhealth.com](http://www.huskyhealth.com) or 1-877-CT-HUSKY): Provides Medicaid coverage for family planning and related services for individuals of childbearing age who are not otherwise eligible for full Medicaid coverage. The department currently maintains 555 cases for this coverage group.

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## *Services for Families and Children*

### Temporary Family Assistance

The department operates **Jobs First**, Connecticut's welfare reform program, providing Temporary Family Assistance to families in need of and eligible for cash assistance. **Jobs First** has been successful in helping thousands of parents move into the workforce and off welfare rolls. During SFY 2017, the department's TFA average monthly caseload was 12,769 households. As the fiscal year ended, the program was serving 27,527 individuals in 11,011 households.

Jobs First is a time-limited program that emphasizes early case management intervention and participation in the labor market. Jobs First establishes a time limit of 21 months for families that contain an adult who is able to work. Extensions beyond 21 months may be available if the adult cannot find a job that makes the family financially independent. Able-bodied adults are referred to Jobs First Employment Services, administered by the Department of Labor and regional Workforce Investment Boards, for help in finding work. During the 21 months, and during extensions, recipients must cooperate with the Jobs First Employment Services program and make a good-faith effort to find a job and keep working. Among the beneficiaries of TFA are children who are living with their grandparents.

**Safety Net** services are provided to families who have exhausted their 21 months of benefits, have an eligible child in the home, have income below the TFA benefit level for their family size, and do not qualify for an extension due to the exhaustion of the time limits. Help with meeting basic needs is available, along with case management and service coordination. The Safety Net program served 1535 families in SFY 2017.

The **Employment Success Program (ESP)** provides early intervention, in-depth assessment and intensive case management services to TFA recipients who are mandatory participants in Jobs First Employment Services. This program seeks to address client barriers that prevent successful participation in the TFA program. ESP served 1063 families in SFY 2017.

The **Individual Performance Contract Program (IPC)** provides case management services to families who have been penalized for non-compliance with Jobs First Employment Services and are at risk of being ineligible for an extension of benefits. The IPC is an opportunity for the adults in the household to restore a good faith effort by removing barriers to employment in order to qualify for an extension of benefits. IPC served 327 families in SFY 2017.

The department helped to support transportation services to TFA and low-income working individuals. The department transferred funds to the CT Department of Transportation (CTDOT), which funded a variety of transportation initiatives that assisted numerous individuals in overcoming their transportation barrier to employment and/or training related activities. The CTDOT also leveraged the DSS funds with funding through the Jobs Access Reverse Commute program and the Federal Transportation Administration.



## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly Food Stamps, provides monthly benefits to help eligible families and individuals afford food purchases. Benefits are provided electronically, enabling clients to use a debit-type swipe card at food markets for federally approved purchases. The general income limit is 185% of the federal poverty level.



Effective January 1, 2016, Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) from age 18 up to and including 49 years old must meet special work requirements to be eligible to receive SNAP benefits for more than three months during a 36-month period, unless the individual is exempt from the time limit or the individual is meeting the ABAWD work requirement. Further information: [www.ct.gov/snap/abawd](http://www.ct.gov/snap/abawd).

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program has helped bridge the difference between food security and hunger for eligible families and individuals in Connecticut. At the end of SFY 2017, 371,981 Connecticut residents were receiving SNAP benefits, with 209,713 total households participating in the program. The SNAP Unit provides policy support to the 12 DSS field offices, while developing and implementing practices that support the program. Each office has an assigned Public Assistance Consultant to help field staff administer this federally-funded program. The SNAP Unit, part of the Division of Eligibility Policy and Economic Security, includes a Local Quality Control Review Unit and administrative support staff.

DSS remains committed to expanding and improving the SNAP Employment and Training program through partnerships with the community college system and community based organizations. In 2017, DSS added three additional SNAP employment and training providers. Middlesex Community College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, and Quinebaug Community College will provide vocational training opportunities in the Danbury, Killingly, Middletown, and Waterbury areas. This brings the number of Employment and Training Providers in the state to thirteen with plans to add an additional two providers in FY 18.

As noted earlier in this report, **DSS posted consecutive 100% timeliness rates for SNAP application processing** in the last two six-month periods evaluated by the federal government, July 2016 through December 2016 and October 2016 through March 2017. Based on actual case sampling, DSS sits at the top of the Northeast region and **2nd overall in the United States**. The department's 3.04% payment error rate is far better than the national average and continues a trend of significant improvement since 2013. Case and Procedural Error Rates (CAPER) have also improved significantly. Over the past year the department improved its CAPER rate from 10.20% to 8.70%. As SFY 2017 closed, Connecticut ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation and top in the northeast region. Meanwhile, approximately \$687 million in federal revenue came into Connecticut's food economy last fiscal year. This equates to about \$119 million over 2010, representing a huge impact on hunger/poverty and help to the local economy.

For more information about SNAP, please visit [www.ct.gov/snap](http://www.ct.gov/snap).

## Child Support Services



Child support enforcement services are available to all families in Connecticut. A need for assistance in establishing and maintaining financial support from both parents is the only criterion for service eligibility, regardless of a family's income.

DSS is the lead agency for Title IV-D child support enforcement activity, working closely with the Judicial Branch's Support Enforcement Services and the Office of the Attorney General to establish and enforce paternity, financial, and medical orders.

The DSS Office of Child Support Services is committed to assisting families in reaching independence through increased financial and medical support, establishment of paternity for children born outside of marriage, and integration of the principles of the Fatherhood Initiative.

Child support efforts that involve other state and local agencies include: the Paternity Registry and Voluntary Paternity Establishment (VPE) Program, which works with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Connecticut birthing hospitals, and community-based agencies with DSS-certified fatherhood programs; employer reporting via the Connecticut Department of Labor of all newly-hired employees; the Arrears Adjustment Program, which works with DSS-certified fatherhood programs; and the Partners Executive Council, which includes representatives from all child support cooperating agencies (Attorney General, Judicial) and works to improve the child support program.

While core functions remain a major focus for the Office of Child Support Services, as the lead Title IV-D agency, a number of initiatives are in place to improve the quality of customer service, program performance, and service delivery. The Office continued participation in longstanding collaborative efforts such as Access and Visitation, providing supervised visitation and other parental counseling services to never-married couples; and the Voluntary Paternity Establishment Program, providing services in 26 area hospitals and nine community-based Fatherhood Initiative program sites.

### ***Electronic Income Withholding***

Income Withholding Orders (IWOs) are transmitted electronically to employers who participate in the federal e-IWO program. Employers who have the capability and have agreed to participate in this program receive IWO information via electronic transmission rather than receiving an income withholding order (JD-FM-1) form via first class mail. Employers then process the child support order information directly into their automated payroll systems. Via e-IWO, state IV-D programs transmit, and employers receive, income withholding orders electronically. In addition, an electronic acknowledgement process enables employers to notify states, tribes or territories about the status of an existing income withholding order.

The e-IWO program increases processing efficiency to improve the timeliness of families receiving payments. OCSE has enlisted over 11,000 employers nationwide. If employers are interested in participating in the e-IWO program, information is available at the Connecticut State Disbursement Unit (SDU) website at: [www.ctchildsupport.com](http://www.ctchildsupport.com).

Connecticut will be working to implement e-IWO with the State Comptroller's Office following legislation to do so (House Bill 7195 - An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Task Force to Study Methods for Improving the Collections of Past Due Child Support; the comptroller to facilitate the electronic processing of federal and state court income withholding orders, including certain child support orders). Connecticut is also working on its next phase of e-IWO; implementation with the Social Security Administration.

***The Connecticut/Rhode Island State Disbursement Unit (SDU) Partnership Agreement***

In August 2010, the Connecticut and Rhode Island child support programs began a joint venture to provide child support payment processing services to the State of Rhode Island at the Connecticut SDU facility. Through an amendment of Connecticut's existing payment processing contract with Systems and Methods, Inc. (SMI), Rhode Island child support customers have received the same efficient and cost-effective child support payment processing services that Connecticut has come to expect, while saving money for both states.

After seven years of this unique partnership, both states continue to realize a cost savings through the sharing of expenses for office rent, management staff, equipment and maintenance. Connecticut saves approximately \$133,143 annually and will continue to realize this savings throughout the term of the SDU contract. With state budget deficits, the partnering of states is proving to be mutually beneficial for child support agencies to provide high quality service while realizing substantial savings.

**John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut**



The Department serves as lead agency for the *John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut*, currently in its 18th year of operation. The initiative is a broad-based, multi-agency, statewide program focused on systems change and the provision of supportive services to improve fathers' ability to be fully and positively involved in the lives of their children. The Department collaborates with a wide range of external partners to assist communities in identifying and addressing the needs of fathers and families.

Partners in the initiative include the Departments of Children & Families, Correction, Education, Labor, Mental Health & Addition Services, and Public Health; Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Services and Court Support Services Divisions; CT Commission on Children; Office of Early Childhood, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Legal Aid Services and numerous community-based partners serving families (mothers, fathers, and children). Efforts are focused on four proven systems change strategies including capacity-building in existing programs, infusing father-friendly principles and practices into existing systems, media advocacy to promote responsible fatherhood and recommending social policy change to support father involvement and strengthen families.

During SFY 2017, DSS participated in **Governor Malloy's Re-Imagining Justice** conference on June 14-15, 2017, at the Hartford Marriott Downtown. The Governor and First Lady Cathy Malloy brought together leading criminal justice professionals from Connecticut and across the

country for a national discussion on the human impact of crime and incarceration, including new approaches to juvenile and young adult offenders, pre-trial justice, incarceration and re-entry.

The Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance invited the CT Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Academy team to participate in the 2016 Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy meeting on July 26-28, 2016, in Annapolis, MD. This was the second of two Academy meetings during the 18-month project period that brought together the eight Systems to Family Stability teams to continue the work of building collaborative systems within and across agencies to improve family economic security.

The goal of the Academy is to develop and implement TANF program improvements over an 18-month period. The Academy also supports state and local TANF programs to improve employment outcomes and strengthen service delivery. DSS' approach will look to implement a multi-generational plan to better meet the school and workforce needs of low-income parents and children concurrently. With the 18-month project period coming to an end, the Office of Family Assistance has approved extended consultation hours for Connecticut to work with an evaluator, as well as Academy coaches, as the state continues to move forward with the implementation of a pilot project at New Opportunities Inc. in Waterbury this fall. DSS will continue to look to align our work with the six CT '2-Gen' legislation pilots around the state. DSS and its partners involved in this collaborative are the Judicial Branch's Support Enforcement Services, Department of Labor, the United Way of CT, Office of Early Childhood, and other community organizations.

DSS partnered with DCF and Central Connecticut State University to sponsor the **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Dads Matter Too Conference** on August 12, 2016, at Central Connecticut State University. This was a collaborative effort involving 200 professionals from state agencies, municipalities and community-based organizations to provide a day of sharing information, resources and professional development on the significant role fathers play in raising healthy, happy children. DSS also partnered with DCF to participate at the **Dads Matter Too 5K Road Race** event, held simultaneously in six cities (Bridgeport, Hartford, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven and Waterbury), where staff operated information/resources tables to provide handouts, brochures and/or answered questions about DSS services, Child Support Services and the Fatherhood Initiative.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual New England Fathering Conference, entitled **Dads: Involved Today, Committed Forever**, was once again hosted by Connecticut at Mystic Marriott Hotel on March 22-24, 2017. The event brought together more than 368 federal, state and local professionals, paraprofessionals and parents from the six New England states and beyond, to share information and gain knowledge about the significant role fathers play in raising healthy, happy children. The event also featured three remarkable keynote speakers: LaMarr Darnell Shields, PhD, co-founder and senior director of education and Innovation at the Cambio Group, and former professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Education; Kara Sundlun, two-time Emmy Award-winning news anchor and talk show host at WFSB-TV; and Scott Semple, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Correction.

Dr. Shields has dedicated his life to inspiring adults and youth alike to pursue a higher purpose, achieve sustainable value for long-term success, and cope with adversity in order to create

opportunities in their personal, professional and spiritual lives. Ms. Sundlun is the author of an inspirational memoir called, 'Finding Dad: From Love Child to Daughter,' in which she shares the story of meeting her biological father, Bruce Sundlun, when she was a teenager and he was the Governor of Rhode Island; and making the important decision to forgive him for not being part of her early life. Commissioner Semple described how a visit to prisons in Germany with Governor Malloy provided insight into a new model of supervision and how this perspective helped develop his vision for Connecticut's system. In April 2015, he dedicated the state's first Reintegration Center, designed to prepare inmates for release and reduce recidivism. The agency has since opened three additional Reintegration Centers, designed to address the specific needs of veterans, treatment of offenders serving DUI sentences and the female population. These centers are viewed nationally as a best practices model for corrections.

The Department and eight of its sister agency partners in the initiative from the Executive and Judicial Branches contributed to the event through financial support which allowed the Planning Committee to offer more scholarships to fathers who attend from local programs in Connecticut and across New England, as well as covering conference costs. Agencies also supported through staff attendance, delivering workshops and participating as panelists for Connecticut's State Roundtable discussion and providing agency/program materials in the event's resource hall.

The Department funded seven certified fatherhood programs during SFY 2017. The certified programs were targeted to serve a minimum statewide total of 440 fathers and offer a comprehensive set of services that support the positive involvement and interactions of fathers with their children. These services include economic stability, intensive case management, parenting education, group based sessions, mediation; and referrals to education, training and employment services. As of the reporting period ending June 30, 2017, the programs have served over 650 fathers statewide. Funded programs are currently being operated by Madonna Place in Norwich; Career Resources Inc. in Bridgeport; GBAPP in Bridgeport; Families in Crisis Inc. in Cheshire at the Manson Youth Correctional Facility; Family Strides Inc. in Torrington; New Haven Family Alliance Inc.; and New Opportunities Inc. in Waterbury.

Some highlighted contract outcomes for these seven programs include:

- 55% of clients improved/maintained compliance with child support orders at (*Madonna Place*)
- 91% of clients report increased time spent with children (*Career Resources*)
- 66% of clients successfully completed a qualified employment training course and/or pre-employment training activity (*Family Strides*)
- 87% of clients increased knowledge about parenting skills (*Families in Crisis*)
- 77% of clients increase in documented taxable earnings (*New Haven Family Alliance*)
- 62% of clients experienced an improved state of behavioral health (*New Opportunities*)
- 83% of clients graduated from high school & .17% experienced a repeat pregnancy (*GBAPP*)

For more information about the Fatherhood Initiative, please visit [www.ct.gov/fatherhood](http://www.ct.gov/fatherhood).

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## *Financial Assistance for Adults*

### State Administered General Assistance

Through the **State-Administered General Assistance (SAGA)** program, the department provides cash assistance to eligible individuals who are unable to work for medical or other prescribed reasons, or meet other non-medical criteria. Approximately 6,949 individuals were receiving SAGA cash assistance at the end of SFY 2017.

Employable individuals are not eligible for SAGA cash assistance. However, employable individuals with drug and/or alcohol abuse problems may be eligible to receive treatment and some financial support through the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' Basic Needs Program.

General applications for SAGA and other DSS services are made at the local DSS offices or online at: [www.ct.gov/dss/apply](http://www.ct.gov/dss/apply) or [www.connect.ct.gov](http://www.connect.ct.gov).

### State Supplement Program

The **State Supplement Program** provides cash assistance to the elders, people with disabilities, and people who are blind to supplement their income and help maintain them at a standard of living established by the General Assembly. To receive benefits, individuals must have another source of income such as Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, or veteran's benefits.

To qualify as aged, an individual must be 65 years of age or older; to qualify as disabled, an individual must be between the ages of 18 and 65 and meet the disability criteria of the federal Social Security Disability Insurance program; and to qualify as blind, an individual must meet the criteria of the Social Security Disability program, or the state Board of Education and Services for the Blind. The program is funded entirely by state funds, but operates under both state and federal law and regulation. Incentives are available to encourage recipients to become as self-supporting as their ages or abilities will allow. State Supplement Program payments also promote a higher degree of self-sufficiency by enabling recipients to remain in non-institutional living arrangements.

At the end of SFY 2017, 14,925 individuals were receiving State Supplement benefits. Further information: [www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss), search term 'state supplement.'

General applications for State Supplement and other DSS services are made at the local DSS offices or online at: [www.ct.gov/dss/apply](http://www.ct.gov/dss/apply) or [www.connect.ct.gov](http://www.connect.ct.gov).

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## *Social Work Services*

**Protective Services for the Elderly** assists persons age 60 and older who have been identified as needing protection from abuse, neglect and/or exploitation. During SFY 2017, agency social workers provided services to 6,912 persons living in the community. The department also received 83 reports regarding residents of long-term care facilities.

The **Conservator of Person program**, for indigent individuals 60 and older who require life management oversight, helped 201 individuals; and the **Conservator of Estate Program** provided financial management services to 72 people in the same age group.

During the fiscal year, the **Community-Based/Essential Services Program** provided services designed to prevent institutionalization to 1,532 persons with disabilities.

The **Family Support Grant Program** helped 11 families with children with developmental disabilities other than mental retardation in meeting extraordinary expenses of respite care, health care, special equipment, medical transportation and special clothing.

### **Family and Individual Social Work Services**

Field and Central Office social work staff provided brief interventions for 2,037 families and individuals to include counseling, case management, advocacy, information and referral, housing and homelessness assistance and consultation, through Family and Individual Social Work Services.

The **Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Initiative**, designed to prevent first-time pregnancies in at-risk teenagers, targets the urban areas of Bridgeport, East Hartford, Hartford, Killingly, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwich, Torrington, Waterbury, West Haven, and Willimantic. The programs served 820 individuals.

In addition to the above services, Social Work Services staff provided more than 100 educational and training sessions to community members, professional associations, agency and institutional staff on DSS social work programs and services. Staff continued to develop practice standards for the agency social work programs, program databases to track client services and outcomes and revised regulations to comply with recent statutory changes.

**Domestic Violence Services** provides shelter services, including support staff, emergency food, living expenses and social services for victims of household abuse. It is also intended to reduce the incidence of household abuse through preventive education programs. The department contracts with non-profit organizations to provide these services in their respective coverage areas. The program is supported with a combination of state and federal funding. There are 16 shelter sites and two host homes funded through a consolidated contract with the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. In Federal Fiscal Year 2016, 1,144 women, and 1,056 children were served by the Domestic Violence Shelter Program.

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## Office of Community Services

The **Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)** is administered by DSS through the Office of Community Services and coordinated by regional Community Action Agencies, in cooperation with municipal and other non-profit human service agencies. Families or individuals may obtain help with their winter heating bills, whether the primary heating source is a utility (natural gas or electricity) or a deliverable heating fuel (oil, kerosene, wood, and propane).

During 2017, DSS and its service partners assisted 84,176 eligible households, distributing \$81.9 million in federally funded energy assistance through CEAP.

- CEAP is available to households with incomes up to 60% of the state median income. Efforts are made to accommodate homebound applicants;
- CEAP-eligible households whose heat is included in their rent, and who pay more than 30% of their gross income toward their rent, are eligible for renter benefits; and
- CEAP offers Heating System Repair/Replacement including oil tanks and clean, tune, & test of systems; for households with incomes up to 60% of the state median income guidelines with homes that are single-family owner occupied;
- CEAP includes liquid assets eligibility requirements.

For additional information regarding CEAP, please visit [www.ct.gov/staywarm](http://www.ct.gov/staywarm) or dial 2-1-1.

## **Refugee Resettlement Services**

Refugees are approved for entry into the country by the U.S. State Department and Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services. Refugees are placed by the State Department with affiliates of national voluntary resettlement agencies nationwide. These affiliates are local non-profit agencies around the country.

In Connecticut, the Department of Social Services contracts with several non-profit agencies to provide case management and employment services that help assimilate this population of newcomers. Monies for these 100% federally-funded services come from several federal grants from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Three resettlement agencies in Connecticut have a direct role in receiving, placing, and resettling refugees. The agencies are Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services, Catholic Charities Migration & Refugee Services, and the International Institute of Connecticut. Additionally, two agencies, the Connecticut Coalition of Mutual Assistance Associations and the Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut, provide supplemental employment/case management services and citizenship training to refugees. This process for refugee resettlement is consistent with that of other states.

The Department of Labor, through Jobs First Employment Services, assists with the provision of employment services to refugee households, particularly those approved for Temporary Family Assistance benefits. Refugees may also be eligible for federally-funded medical and financial assistance, as well as federally-funded food assistance (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP); and federally- and state-funded medical assistance (Medicaid) and financial assistance, depending on their situation.

For the federal fiscal year that ended Sept 30, 2016, 819 refugees were resettled in Connecticut. Nations of origin of refugees settled in Connecticut include Afghanistan, Angola, Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Ukraine. So far this federal fiscal year, 409 refugees have been placed in Connecticut between October 1, 2016, and June 30, 2017. After entry, a refugee can request legal permanent resident status after one-year residence in the U.S. and can apply for U.S. citizenship five years after date of entry to the U.S.

Repatriation Services are provided for U.S. citizens who are or were residents of Connecticut and who need emergency evacuation from another country for medical treatment, to escape from a dangerous or hostile environment, or are being deported from another country. DSS works with International Social Services, a subcontractor for the U.S. Department of State, to assist Connecticut repatriates in finding housing and accessing medical treatment. DSS Social Workers provide transitional case management to repatriated citizens.

### **Community Services Block Grant, Human Services Infrastructure Initiative, and Community Action Agencies**

During SFY 2017, the department continued to administer the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), which provides core funding and underlying support for the state's Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and the Connecticut Association for Community Action. The CAAs are designated anti-poverty agencies which collaborate across sectors, leveraging federal funds with state, local, and private resources to coordinate and deliver a broad range of programs and services for low-income families and individuals. The goal is to help the state's vulnerable population reduce and/or remove barriers and work toward self-sufficiency.

In SFY 2017, CAAs served 313,534 individuals in 132,351 families in need. Vulnerable populations served included 104,611 children, 32,327 people with disabilities, 70,325 seniors and 21,390 people who lacked health insurance.

In addition to the \$8,704,343 of federal CSBG funds expended by the department, the CAAs brought in and administered \$212,441,436 of other sources (federal, state, local and private) funds in direct services to fight poverty. These services include employment and training, financial literacy and income management, nutrition, housing and shelter, health care, education, child and family development, senior support, energy, and emergency assistance.

For every \$1 of CSBG, the Connecticut network also leveraged \$7.99 from state, local, and private sources, including the value of volunteer hours. Including all federal sources, the CT Community Action Network leveraged \$24.77 per \$1 of CSBG funds.

Since 2004, the Connecticut CAAs have been integral to DSS' Human Services Infrastructure Initiative (HSI), in partnership with 2-1-1 Infoline. HSI is a coordinated, client-centered approach to human services delivery. The initiative: 1) integrates intake, assessment, state and federal program eligibility information and referral; 2) streamlines customer access to services within and between CAAs, DSS and other human service partners; and 3) connects clients to community resources before, during and after DSS intervention.

The CAAs annually employ a Results-Based Accountability framework called Results- Oriented Management and Accountability, or ROMA, to measure customer, agency and community outcomes based on the 16 CSBG National Performance Indicators. Additionally, every three years, the CAAs undergo a self-assessment and peer review process administered by the Northeast Institute for Quality Community Action to ensure high standards in governance, planning, and management.

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## **ADDITIONAL SERVICES/DIVISIONS WITHIN DSS**

### **Office of Legal Counsel, Regulations and Administrative Hearings (OLCRAH)**

The legal division of OLCRAH acts as in-house counsel to the agency on a wide range of issues involving every aspect of the department's work and oversees the agency's regulation promulgation process.

Because the department administers myriad programs, each with its own guiding statutes and regulations, the need to provide day-to-day legal advice to staff is constant. OLCRAH attorneys are also consulted on a regular basis concerning the agency's responses to requests for documents under the Freedom of Information Act and pertaining to its contractual obligations.

In addition to providing general legal advice to the agency, the OLCRAH attorneys handle conservatorship petitions in the Probate Courts for the Protective Services for the Elderly Program. Such legal assistance has become more necessary each year as the laws governing conservatorship hearings have become more exacting and the types of cases brought by the department have become more complex.

OLCRAH attorneys act as hearing officers in fraud cases the department brings against Medicaid providers and in cases contesting Department provider audits.

OLCRAH attorneys act as Attorney General Designees and are responsible for preparing answers to discrimination complaints brought by both department employees and clients to the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). After they file the answer with the CHRO, the department's attorneys act as the liaison between the department and the Attorney General's Office as the case winds its way through the CHRO fact-finding process.

The Ethics Liaison is housed within OLCRAH and serves as a point of contact for staff questions concerning the State Code of Ethics and for coordination of ethics compliance as requested by Office of State Ethics.

With regard to the agency's regulations, OLCRAH attorneys, in conjunction with the agency's policy experts, draft and promulgate regulations concerning all of the department's programs.

The Administrative Hearings Division of OLCRAH schedules and holds administrative hearings, in accordance with the provisions of the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act, for those applicants for and recipients of DSS programs who wish to contest actions taken by the department. Hearing officers hear and decide the following types of cases:

- Appeals when benefits are denied, discontinued or reduced in Medicaid programs (HUSKY A, C and D); Medicaid waiver programs (Personal Care Attendants, Connecticut Home

Care Program for Elders, Money Follows the Person, Acquired/Traumatic Brain Injury); HUSKY B; Connecticut Insurance Premium Assistance; Connecticut Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Temporary Family Assistance; Assistance to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled; State Administered General Assistance; and the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program; Medical services under Husky A, C and D; Individual and Family Grant for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) following a disaster in the state; Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries; CT AIDS Drug Assistance Program; Department of Developmental Services Community-Based Services; Eviction Prevent and Emergency Housing; and the Security Deposit Program. Hearing officers also conduct hearings on Access Health CT programs: Advance Payment Tax Credit, Cost Sharing Reduction, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

- Pharmacy Lock-in appeals; nursing facility discharges and involuntary transfers appeals; Medicaid Long Term Care level of care denials.
- Administrative Disqualifications for the following programs: TFA, SAGA, and SNAP.
- Appeals of claimed overpayments and recoupment of benefits, including liens placed by the Department of Social Services; appeals of recoveries of assistance by the Department of Administrative Services through liens on accident awards and other claims.
- Child Support appeals by obligors concerning pertaining to administrative offset; state and federal income tax offset; consumer reporting; property liens; liens on lump sum benefits; withholding of financial, insurance and inheritance assets and of lottery winnings; misapplied payments and passport seizures.

In an effort to accommodate homebound appellants and cut down on expenses associated with home visit hearings, such as transportation costs and traveling time, the Administrative Hearings unit continues to conduct hearings via teleconferencing when appropriate.

For further information on the Office of Legal Counsel, Regulations and Administrative Hearings, visit [www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss), search term 'OLCRAH.'

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### [Quality Assurance](#)

The Office of Quality Assurance (QA) is responsible for ensuring the fiscal and programmatic integrity of programs administered by the Department of Social Services. In addition, QA is responsible for ensuring the integrity of administrative functions of the Department. QA has five separate divisions, each with unique program integrity functions: Audit, Investigations and Recoveries, Special Investigations, Quality Control and Third Party Liability. During SFY 2017, QA identified over \$674 million in overpayments, third-party recoveries and cost avoidance.

## **The Audit Division**

The Audit Division ensures compliance, efficiency, and accountability within federal and state programs administered by the Department by detecting and preventing mismanagement, waste and program abuse and ensuring that state and federal dollars are spent appropriately, responsibly, and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. To achieve this objective, The Audit Division:

- Performs federally mandated audits of medical and health care providers that are paid through the various medical assistance programs administered by the Department;
- Reviews medical provider activities, audits claims, identifies overpayments, and educates providers on program integrity issues;
- Provides support and assistance to the Department Special Investigations Division in the ongoing effort to combat fraud and abuse;
- Performs audits of the Department's operations, involving review of administrative and programmatic functions and the electronic data processing systems used in their support;
- Coordinates the Department's responses to all outside audit organizations reviews performed on the Department, including but not limited to, the State Auditors of Public Accounts and federal audit organizations;
- Reviews federal and state single audit reports and performs audits of financial, administrative and programmatic functions of the Department's grantees;
- Performs data analytics to identify aberrant billing activity and pursues collection of such overpayments; and
- Substantiates whether complaints received from various sources are valid and determines the proper disposition of the complaint including conducting an audit or forwarding to the Department's Special Investigations Division.

## **Investigations and Recoveries Division**

The Investigations and Recoveries Division is comprised of two units; the Client Investigations Unit and the Resources and Recoveries Unit. Both units have investigation staff located at both central and field office locations.

- **Client Investigations Unit** investigates alleged client fraud in various programs administered by the Department. This unit performs investigations via pre-eligibility, post-eligibility and other fraud investigation measures that include, but are not limited to, data integrity matches with other state and federal agencies. This unit also oversees the toll-free Fraud Hotline 1-800-842-2155 that is available to the public to report situations where it's perceived that a public assistance recipient, a provider, or a medical provider may be defrauding the state.

- **Resources and Recoveries Unit** is charged with ensuring that the Department is the payer of last resort for the cost of a client's care by detecting, verifying, and utilizing third-party resources; establishing monetary recoveries realized from liens, mortgages, and property sales; and establishing recoveries for miscellaneous overpayments.

### **Special Investigations Division**

The Special Investigations Division is comprised of two units; Provider Investigations and Provider Enrollment.

- **Provider Investigations Unit** is charged with the responsibility of coordinating and conducting activities to investigate allegations of fraud in the Connecticut Medical Assistance Program. When appropriate, credible allegations of fraud are referred to the Department's law enforcement partners pursuant to a memorandum of understanding (MOU). Parties to the MOU are the Office of the Chief State's Attorney, the Office of the Attorney General and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Inspector General. Each entity is responsible for independently investigating the Department's referral to determine if a criminal and/or civil action is appropriate.

- **Provider Enrollment Unit** is responsible for the review and approval of all provider enrollment and re-enrollment applications, on an on-going basis. This Unit also shares responsibility for ensuring federal and ACA requirements for provider enrollment are instituted and adhered to. Coordination of efforts between the Provider Investigations Unit and Provider Enrollment Unit strengthens Connecticut's program integrity efforts.

### **Quality Control Division**

The Quality Control Division is responsible for the federally-mandated reviews of child care, Medicaid, and the SNAP programs. A newly-established set of federally-required Medicaid reviews has been implemented under the Payment Error Rate Measurement program. Reviews of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cases and special projects may also be performed by this unit.

### **Third Party Liability Division**

The Third Party Liability Division is responsible for the Department's compliance with federal Third Party Liability requirements and recovering tax-payer funded health care from commercial health insurance companies, Medicare and other legally liable third parties. The Division manages programs that identify client third party coverage and recover client health care costs.

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### *Affirmative Action*

The Department of Social Services is strongly committed to the concepts, principles, and goals of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. The objectives are commensurate with the state's policy of compliance with all federal and state constitutional provisions, laws, regulations, guidelines, and executive orders that prohibit discrimination. The **Affirmative Action Plan** submitted on March 1, 2017, was approved and granted continued annual filing status by the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. DSS administers its programs, services, and contracts in a fair and impartial manner.

During SFY 2017, the Department of Social Services continued to monitor and improve its practices in employment and contracting, giving special consideration to affirmative action goal attainment, diversity training for all employees, and contract compliance. At the close of the October 31, 2016, affirmative action reporting period, 49.8% of DSS employees were minorities, 71.3% were women, and 0.3% was self-identified as having a disability. During the plan year, the department hired 17 new employees: 2 (11.8%) were minorities and 15 (88.2%) were women.

As part of its ongoing commitment, the department's affirmative action posture is reflected in the established, and Department of Administrative Services approved, goals for Small-, Women- and Minority-owned business enterprises. The agency actively solicits participation from these categories in its selection of contractors.

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### *Division of Financial Services*

The Division of Financial Services supports the department through a full range of financial oversight and operational functions. These financial management activities are provided through three key service groups outlined below.

**The Budget and Revenue Group** includes the Budget, Revenue, Benefiting Accounting, Accounts Receivable and Cash Management functions.

The Budget Unit was responsible for budgeting \$3.7 billion in state general funds in SFY 2017 through 33 distinct budgeted accounts. Ongoing functions of this group include developing estimates of agency spending, producing or reviewing detailed spending plans, monitoring against these plans and estimates, facilitating the development of agency budget options and providing updates on the status of the budget process for the agency. In addition to operational expenses, the Budget Group develops forecasts and expenditure reports for the many complex medical and cash assistance services DSS provides to eligible state residents.

During the past fiscal year, this group has reviewed and approved spending plans that allocate available funding to several hundred contracts; monitored, reviewed and estimated approximately \$3.7 billion in state General Fund expenses (over \$7.2 billion including federal reimbursement); provided metrics for all key program areas including Medicaid, assistance programs, and operational accounts; and reviewed and approved all of the agency's position requests for funding availability and coding accuracy. The group continues to be involved in

providing fiscal analyses on major department initiatives that were implemented or proposed during the year.

The Revenue Unit is responsible for revenue reporting which includes the calculation and filing of the federal award requests and claiming for Connecticut's Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance and Money Follows the Person programs. In SFY 2017, funding from revenue generating programs resulted in over \$1 billion in federal revenue for the state. The unit is also responsible for cash management for all federal accounts. The Cash Management area oversees the drawdown and reconciliation of 101 grants contained on two different federal draw systems. In SFY 2016, this area accessed over \$5.3 billion in federal funding for the state.

The Benefit Accounting Unit is responsible for the management of funds associated with over 30 DSS benefit entitlement programs utilizing state and federal funds, such as Medicaid and Temporary Family Assistance. Other programs include HUSKY B, Supplemental Security Interim Assistance, State Supplement Benefits, State-Administered General Assistance, along with several other benefit programs.

The Accounts Receivable Unit, responsible for a significant level of receivables related to the Medicaid program, as well as those of other programs, is located within this service center. During the past fiscal year, the department successfully reduced accounts receivable balances greater than one year old by over \$3 million.

**The Federal Reporting and Accounting Services Group** includes the Federal Reporting, General Accounting and Accounts Payable, Purchasing and Cost Allocation and Contract Administration functions.

The Federal Reporting Unit is responsible for the fiscal monitoring and financial reporting of federal grants and for the department's public assistance cost allocation plan. The federal reports submitted to the federal agencies are grant level expenditures for point and time and the Federal Fund Accountability Transparency Act (FFATA) obligation reporting at a sub-recipients level. The Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (SEFA) reporting is also completed by this unit and submitted to the Office of the State Comptroller.

The General Accounting Unit coordinates the fund postings to the state accounting system, complex accounting adjustments and cost tracking, GAAP accounting, and the maintenance of the agency Chart of Accounts. The unit is also responsible for the control and administration of petty cash and the monthly Comprehensive Financial Status Report (CFSR).

The Accounts Payable unit is responsible for all vendor payments issued through the state accounting system and to ensure all payments are processed and are done timely, accurately, and in compliance with the federal and state rules and regulations

The Cost Allocation function provides a mechanism to allocate the administrative costs to benefiting programs and grants administered by the department, in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87. The group is also responsible for the Random Moment Sample System, which supports the cost allocation process for field operations expenses.

The Purchasing Unit is responsible for providing purchasing function for the agency, including the purchase and leasing of equipment, supplies, and services for the continued operation of the department and in support of employees, clients, and program operations. Purchasing staff ensure that purchases are conducted in accordance with state guidelines and state statutes.

The Contract Administration Unit is charged with the oversight and administration of all contracts and procurement functions for the department and ensure that the department complies with policies and procedures pertaining to contracting promulgated by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and that all contracts contain the requisite contract provisions, as directed by the OPM and the Attorney General's Office.

Staff are responsible for managing the Department's procurement process and provide direction and support in all administrative contract activities for the purchase of services, technical assistance and other services. The staff work with DSS program divisions to contract for the delivery of client services through the development and execution of 'purchase of service' contracts with non-profit, community-based human service agencies and other governmental agencies and to arrange for the delivery of services to the department through development and execution of 'personal services agreements.' Unit staff also work with sister state agencies to develop Memoranda of Agreement and Understanding to ensure that the transfer of funding between agencies is properly expended and monitored.

Finally, this group is responsible for the development and submission of the department's annual Small Business & Minority goals reporting and the ongoing quarterly reporting on efforts to comply with the goals, as approved by the Department of Administrative Services

During SFY 2017, this group allocated close to \$570 million in department administrative costs for the purpose of accessing federal reimbursement, compiled 430 federal reports for \$127 million in direct federal grants and \$661 million in SNAP benefits, processed over 8,300 CORE-CT payment vouchers, and developed and executed over 300 contacts with over 190 contractors and sister agencies.

The Division also includes the Convalescent Accounting unit, which successfully assisted in Medicaid payment starts for reimbursement of care provided in skilled nursing facilities.

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### *Facilities Operations and Support Services*

This unit provides support services to all DSS offices, including central administration and 12 field office locations throughout the state. Staff monitor and address building-related maintenance and operational matters, including security needs, health and safety, environmental issues and emergency requirements, while ensuring landlord compliance with all federal, state and local building code regulations.

Staff track equipment inventory, processes surplus items for reuse, arrange for recycling of IT equipment, and maintain a fleet of 95 state vehicles. Facilities Operations and Support Services is the department's primary liaison with the Department of Administrative Services for all DSS-leased and state-owned office space, totaling 380,000 square feet. Over the past 3 years the unit has recommended and successfully negotiated a reduction in office space leased by DSS, providing yearly rental and utility savings while modernizing and providing for a more efficient use of space. The unit has also focused attention to incorporating universal design standards at each of DSS' office locations in need of these much-needed improvements. The unit continues to review space plans and recommend operational and energy upgrades for improved office facilities as well as short and long term savings.

In addition to daily operational task, unit staff establish and monitor the budget for the use of capital equipment funds, control equipment costs and implement Lean processes and ideas for improved operational results. Staff is on call 24 hours per day. Facilities Operations and Support staff strive daily to support their DSS colleagues by providing the tools and environment necessary to ensure uninterrupted service to our clients.

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### [Information Technology Services](#)

The Information Technology Services Division is comprised of several separate and distinct sections, that is, Technical Services, Support Services, the Data Warehouse, and the Document Center/Mailroom. These sections provide extensive technical, business, and operational support to both the program and administrative areas of the agency.

The **Technical Services Section** is responsible for the technical computer systems changes, maintenance and administration. This includes Operations (batch and on-line processing), Help Desk Support and Communications, LAN/WAN Administration, Microsystems, Applications Development (including programming and systems analysis) and Data Base Administration units.

### **Operations, Helpdesk, LAN/WAN and Communications Support Units**

The staff in the Operations, Helpdesk, and the LAN/WAN areas, provide overall support in the following areas:

Operations:

- Computer operations / maintenance;
- PC/Mainframe networking;
- Batch schedules / processing;
- Library functions;
- Data transmission / receipt;
- Data control functions;
- Report distribution;
- Disaster recovery;
- Equipment installation;
- Field Relocation; and

- Telephone Support (including iPhone devices)

LAN Support:

- LAN/WAN Technical support;
- Active Directory Administration;
- Citrix Terminal Servers and Applications;
- Email Administration;
- Data Backup / recovery;
- Virus protection / Operating System Patch Management;
- Capacity Planning and Performance;
- Security;
- Internet Access;
- Technical Standards; and
- New product evaluation

Coordination of effort among the staff of these two areas is critical and is essential to the successful maintenance of the mainframe and LAN/WAN environments. In addition, staff is primarily responsible for the processing of both the production and test Eligibility Management System cycles along with generation of daily notices, checks, and the communicating of various data files to the appropriate entities via file transfer protocol or various other types of media.

Supporting over 3,000 PCs and 50+ servers utilizing the DSS infrastructure, the staff maintains all the hardware and is responsible for troubleshooting and problem resolution in an effort to support agency staff in performing their daily activities and ability to provide the necessary services to the customers.

The **PC Microsystems - Applications Unit** provides a variety of computer-based system and application support services to support the operation of the department's program and support divisions. The unit develops/documents software for office automation applications, evaluates new hardware/software to improve program effectiveness, procurement of hardware and software systems, and manages/maintains data management systems.

In addition to providing client/server application support and development services to the department, the unit is also responsible for designing, maintaining and determining the technical path of internet and intranet-based web sites associated with the department. The unit provides a structured approach for maintaining content on these sites as well as following state design guidelines, accessibility mandates and interoperability practices.

The unit maintains eleven primary agency websites and two intranet sites. Maintenance of these sites includes content management, change management and design modifications. New web sites are added at a rate of approximately one to two per year.

The **Application Development and Data Base Administration Unit** provides the core IT support for the agency, including application requirements, analysis, development, implementation and maintenance to the mainframe environment, that is, the Eligibility Management System (EMS). This mainframe system provides fully integrated data processing

support for the determination of client eligibility, benefit calculation and issuance, financial accounting, and management reporting. EMS supports many of the agency's major programs such as Temporary Family Assistance, Medical Assistance (HUSKY and Medicaid), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, State Supplement to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled, the State Administered General Assistance and the Refugee Cash and Medical assistance programs.

The **Support Services Section** provides support to the Technical Services Section, as well as supplying other services to the department, the legislature, other state agencies, and the general public. Within ITS Support Services are the EMS/ConneCT User Support Group, CCSES User Support Group and the Systems Planning Unit.

**EMS/ConneCT User Support Group** - the 'Help Desk' for EMS/ConneCT users - responds to questions ranging from password resets to system functionality issues to the user acceptance testing of new enhancements to the systems.

**CT Child Support Enforcement System (CCSES) User Support Group** - provides testing of changes to the CCSES computer systems and tests new computer software from a user's perspective before the changes are moved into the production region of the system. The group also handles project management of CCSES systems changes, and provides 'help desk' service.

The **Systems Planning Unit** is responsible for providing overall ITS project management, EMS project management, EMS business and systems functional requirements definition and various other planning activities for EMS, ConneCT, CCSES, and PC projects.

The **Data Warehouse Administration Unit** manages the Department's data warehouse that provides users access to Connecticut Medical Assistance Program data for the creation of ad hoc queries and reports, as well as for producing regularly scheduled reports. The data warehouse system operates the Management and Administrative Reporting and Surveillance and Utilization Review subsystems for the Medicaid Management Information System. It also has fraud/abuse and overpayment functionality. It serves as a decision support system for program and financial analysis and the ability to respond to information requests.

The **Document Center and Mailroom Unit** provides departmental printing and mail insertion services, including more than 10 million notices to clients per year. The automated inserting equipment can process 6,000-8,000 items per hour and can affix the proper discounted postage rate in one process. By presorting the mail, the department saves approximately \$30,000 per month on postage.

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**[Office of Organizational & Skill Development](#)** *"Building Skills, Developing Success"*

The Office of Organizational & Skill Development (OSD) provides the department, its staff, and partners with training and organizational development services that enhance staff skills and support the DSS mission. In recognition of a major OSD initiative, the American Public Human Services Association recognized the office with its 2017 National Staff Development

and Training Association Quality Program Award for the ImpaCT training program at DSS. ImpaCT is the department's new integrated eligibility system.

OSD's core services include training and staff development, organizational development, change management, media, web-based training, systems and graphic support in programs, computer systems, leadership and professional development. The Office of Organizational & Skill Development supports organizational development initiatives such as the John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative, LEAN and ImpaCT.

Overall, OSD's mission entails provision of timely, relevant and effective organizational and staff development activities to: enhance knowledge, skills and abilities of the staff to ensure DSS customers receive effective services; ensure a culturally responsive delivery of services that recognizes and affirms diversity; improve job performance through the institution of measures of accountability to inspire public confidence; provide employees with opportunities to develop their potential within the context of the organization and overall career development; facilitate compliance with DSS policies; and institute systemic interventions that support organizational operations in the area of communication, project management, access, and service.

OSD also supports DSS partners (other state agencies, Community Action Agencies, hospitals, etc.) with training in topics like the Voluntary Paternity Establishment program, the use of the ImpaCT system, and programmatic overviews.

OSD is established through a collaborative agreement between DSS and the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and DSS.

**Improvements/Achievements for SFY 2017 include:**

**Training Development & Delivery--**

**Programmatic** - Eligibility CORE (96 staff); Child Support CORE; ImpaCT Training (1,832 staff; 1,900 days of training delivery).

**Professional Leadership Development--**

Orientation; Pre-Supervisory Series; and the Supervisory Series.

**Media Production and Support--**

Video and graphic development for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

(SNAP) Summer Meals; electronic signage for client information in DSS offices (DSS Network); and Energy Assistance publications.

**Organizational Development & Support--**

Fatherhood Initiative; LEAN projects; Organizational Change Management and Project Support for ImpaCT (ImpaCT) – Implementation Communications, Business Process Development; External Partners Support; Job Aids and FAQs.

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### *Human Resources Division*

The Human Resources Division is responsible for providing technical guidance and support to all Department of Social Service employees. Staff are involved in addressing issues which impact human resource management for the agency as a whole, through coordination of policy issues, involvement in labor relations activity and, in general, with the objective of ensuring that the quality of human resource service throughout the department remains consistent.

Functions of the Human Resource Division include: providing general personnel services to all staff; coordination and administration of information related to personnel data collection; decentralized examination and the development and dissemination of agency policies and procedures; participation in labor relations activities with respect to contract administration and negotiation, staff training and the grievance process; administration of payroll, medical and other benefits; implementation of health and safety programs, including employee wellness education and workers' compensation.

Personnel transactions administered by the division included hires, promotions, demotions, reassignments, transfers, retirements, discharges, resignations, leaves and general data changes.