



Connecticut Association for Human Services
110 Bartholomew Avenue · Suite 4030
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
www.cahs.org

Casey McGuane, President
James P. Horan, Executive Director
860.951.2212
860.951.6511 fax

3/2/17

Testimony before the Human Services Committee

Emmanuel Adero, Policy Analyst, Connecticut Association for Human Services, March 2, 2017

Senator Moore, Senator Markley, Representative Abercrombie, and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Emmanuel Adero, and I am a Policy Analyst for the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS). CAHS is a statewide nonprofit agency that works to reduce poverty and promote economic success for children and families through both policy and program work. We appreciate the opportunity to present our policy direction for this legislative session and as we move towards the future.

I am writing in regard to H.B. 7040, the implementation of the Governor's budget recommendations for Human Services Programs. Among the proposed amendments in this bill is the shifting of the administration of Birth to Three from the Office of Early Childhood to the Department of Social Services, in accordance with the Governor's proposed budget.

While we understand that the current fiscal environment creates a great deal of difficulty in producing a balanced budget, CAHS supports a braided system of early childhood program initiatives. An educational support program serving the families of the youngest children, Birth to Three, we believe, functions best as part of a larger system of early childhood initiatives, and we believe that the ideal system of such initiatives is a fully funded Office of Early Childhood. This degree of integration was the intent of the OEC when it was established.

Shifting Birth to Three to DSS will prove disruptive to the families it serves, and will cause additional disruption to the network of programs and services under OEC, decreasing the efficiency with which they work together to serve families and children. Providers we affiliate with, mindful of the potential of disruption to their operations, prefer that Birth to Three remain within the OEC.

The Medicaid portion of Birth to Three was moved to DSS in 2015, and the argument has been made that with the new Medicaid reimbursement requirements, Birth to Threes being administered solely through DSS would be in the best interests of families in the program who receive Medicaid benefits. However, 40% of the children who receive Birth to Three services do not receive HUSKY.

While we laud the efforts to streamline the administration of Birth to Three under a single agency, we believe that the OEC is a better home for the program than DSS. A braided system dedicated to early care and education is optimal for the utility of the programs and the benefit of the children and families they serve, and we strongly urge that this system be given enough time to meet its goals, to continue to flourish, and to be evaluated as a cohesive system. We believe that the establishment of a vehicle by which to transfer funds to OEC programs will prove more practical in the long term, than splitting up the programs in order to fund them independently.