

# American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Hezekiah Beardsley Connecticut Chapter

Connecticut  
Council of  
Child and  
Adolescent  
Psychiatry, Inc.



November 19, 2015

Governor Dannel P. Malloy  
State Capitol  
Hartford, CT

Dear Governor Malloy,

We are writing on behalf of the nearly one thousand pediatricians in the state of Connecticut as well as the nearly three hundred Child and Adult Psychiatrists, all of who care for the mental health care of the children in the state of Connecticut. We are deeply concerned about the possible cuts to certain mental health services that we rely on to care for those children.

The Regional Behavioral Health Consultation to Healthcare Providers (ACCESS-Mental Health in the DCF Budget) was signed into law following the Sandy Hook tragedy to serve as an early intervention/ improved access to mental health care initiative for children. The service provides pediatric primary care providers (PCPs) with access to consultation and coordination of care services for children and families in need.

In just over one year that the program has been in place, over 1,500 children and their families in the State have been served. This means that these children and their families have been able to access needed mental health services and early intervention that they likely would otherwise not have received. Had this program not been in place, these children would have not been identified until later in their illnesses causing them to utilize more state resources in treatment and possible ED and inpatient management, as well as the pain they and their families would have experienced.

In addition, the ACCESS Mental Health programs have been providing education and support to primary care providers so that they can better screen for and address behavioral health issues within their practices. The impact of this program reaches many more children than we have been directly called about. As such we are helping to facilitate practice changes that address behavioral health issues sooner, better and earlier. This will result in better and more cost effective care.

While we know that the State is in a deep financial crisis, it simply does not make sense to cut this particular program. It is a proven intervention, being used in 30 other states, and has been used by those intended to use it very quickly. The dismantling of the mental health system for children, so soon after our children suffered through Sandy Hook tragedy is unacceptable.

Please continue full funding in the DCF budget for the Regional Behavioral Health Consultation to Healthcare Providers (ACCESS-MH).

We are very happy to answer any questions you may have about the effectiveness of this program. It has been an enormous benefit to those physicians and children who have used it.

Yours truly,

Andrew Lustbader, MD  
President  
CCCAP

Anton Alerte, MD  
President  
CTAAP