



Prevent Child Abuse New York™

**Testimony at the Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Health
Monday, February 12, 2018
Provided by: Timothy Hathaway, Executive Director**

Good afternoon! Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Timothy Hathaway, Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse New York (PCANY).

PCANY provides three primary services both locally and across the state of New York. Our **community awareness** efforts are aimed at increasing understanding of how individuals can use the Five Protective Factors to help prevent child maltreatment. Specific programs include the Parent Helpline and the Pinwheels for Prevention Campaign.

Our **training and technical assistance** efforts are geared to providing professionals and communities knowledge, tools and resources to make great environments for families and children. We provide Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Certification, and run the New York State Parenting Education Partnership, Enough Abuse Sexual Abuse Prevention, Community-based Strengthening Families and Child Abuse Prevention courses. In addition, we provide direct staff consulting and mini grants to organization that are implementing prevention strategies.

Finally, our **policy and advocacy** work drives initiatives both at a state and local level designed to change systems that impact child maltreatment issues. We advocate for evidence-based policy solutions that target root causes of child maltreatment including increases for early childhood home visiting, early care and education system development, reduction of unplanned pregnancies, and family stability/ economic issues.

I will talk to you today about a few of the issues we support: maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting; preconception planning; and healthy relationships.

Why do these issues matter to PCANY? Because more than 65,000 children are abused or neglected every year. But we could decrease that number if we focused

attention on the root causes of abuse and invested in programs that strengthen families.

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting

We were pleased to see that the Executive Budget includes recommendations from the 1,000 Days on Medicaid Initiative, including funding for maternal, infant, and early childhood programs in three high-need communities. This proposal leverages existing evidence-based programs and prioritizes communities with greatest need. We urge the Legislature to support the recommendations of the First 1,000 Days workgroup, including its home visiting component.

However, we were once again disappointed to see already-established home visiting programs flat-funded, instead of increasing their capacity. Healthy Families New York, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and The Parent-Child Home Program, Inc. are research-based and proven to decrease abuse, improve health outcomes, and increase school readiness. Yet only 5% of eligible children currently receive home visiting services. According to a recent report from the New York State Citizen Review Panels, 279,600 children in our State could benefit from home visiting. Why are we not investing in these programs?

In addition, we know that the home visiting workforce is hard working and stressed. In order to retain staff, who have made important connections to families, we ask that you include \$200,000 to create the position of statewide coordinator. The coordinator would provide model-neutral training to support the workforce and better prepare them for their responsibilities, while also promoting the central or coordinated intake model that the Department of Health has introduced and which supports referrals across programs. In this way, we could close gaps between programs, serve more families better, and retain dedicated staff.

Preconception Planning

We need to concentrate on a mother's health before she becomes pregnant. Vital time is lost when providers and communities fail to address the period prior to conception. When women are not healthy—physically and emotionally—maternal mortality, maternal depression, and infant mortality all increase.

Therefore, we support passage of the Comprehensive Contraceptive Care Act (CCCA), which will require health insurance policies to include coverage of all FDA-approved contraceptive drugs, devices, and products, as well as voluntary sterilization procedures, contraceptive education and counseling, and related follow-up services.

Healthy Relationships

We are supportive of the Governor's proposed Be Aware, Be Informed curriculum and are working to ensure that it includes a child sexual abuse component. It is critical to understand that sexual harassment and misconduct, when aimed at someone under the

age of 18, is child sexual abuse. In New York State in 2015, there were 1,990 substantiated cases of child sexual abuse. We cannot ignore that some of this abuse was perpetuated by school personnel and by other students. We urge you to support development of this curriculum and inclusion in school settings.

Thank you for your time.

