

PUBLIC ACT NO. 97-288

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HEALTHY FAMILIES TASK FORCE AND DESIGNATING FAMILY DAY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (a) There is established a Healthy Families Advisory Commission to monitor the state-wide system for Healthy Families Connecticut developed pursuant to section 17a-56 of the general statutes, as amended by section 2 of this act. The commission shall consist of: (1) One member appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives and one member appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who shall be members of the General Assembly; (2) one member appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives and one member appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who shall be members of the General Assembly; (3) a representative of the Governor; (4) the Commissioner of Children and Families, or his designee; (5) the Commissioner of Social Services, or his designee; (6) the Commissioner of Public Health, or his designee; (7) the Commissioner of Education, or his designee; (8) the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or his designee; (9) the executive director of the Commission on Children, or his designee; (10) a representative of the Child Advocate's Office, who shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and (11) a representative of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse who shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate.

(b) The commission shall be responsible for: (1) Reviewing Healthy Families Connecticut pilot sites and advising the General Assembly on outcomes and recommending program modifications, if necessary; (2) preparing plans to implement Healthy Families Connecticut on a state-wide basis; (3) monitoring cooperative, coordinated approaches of state and private agencies involved in Healthy Families Connecticut and expanding such approaches to incorporate other, similar activities; (4) studying state and privately funded home visitation programs as an initial step in establishing a cost-effective, collaborative and comprehensive healthy families system; (5) monitoring the effects of welfare reform on the factors associated with the risk of child abuse; and (6) building a network of public and private state, regional and local organizations for the purpose of collaborating to strengthen and support families with newborns and children up to the age of five.

Sec. 2. Section 17a-56 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof: (a) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall establish the structure for a state-wide system for Healthy Families Connecticut, which is based on the national Healthy Families model, and which is intended to demonstrate the benefits of preventive services by significantly reducing the abuse and neglect of infants and by enhancing parent-child relationships through hospital-based assessment with home outreach follow-up on infants and their families within families identified as high risk. (b) Within available appropriations, the Commissioner of Children and Families shall establish healthy families pilot programs in geographic areas which are not currently served by prevention outreach services and which have a high rate of confirmed child abuse and neglect, a high rate of infant mortality and low birthweight infants, or a high rate of teen pregnancy. ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 1997, THE COMMISSIONER SHALL ESTABLISH THREE ADDITIONAL PILOT

SITES. Services shall be provided on a voluntary basis to families identified through the assessment process as having a high risk of child abuse or neglect. (c) The healthy families pilot programs shall: (1) Provide a comprehensive risk assessment of all newborn children and their families; (2) identify families that would benefit most from the program; (3) provide and coordinate support services including, but not limited to, community-based home visiting intervention services, counseling, child care and primary health care services; and (4) provide follow-up and support services until the child attains the age of five. (d) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall: (1) Develop the comprehensive risk assessment to be used by the pilot programs; (2) develop the training program, standards, and protocols for the pilot programs; and (3) develop, issue and evaluate requests for proposals to procure the services required by this section. In evaluating the proposals, the commissioner shall take into consideration the most effective and consistent service delivery system allowing for the continuation of current public and private programs.

(e) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall establish a data system to enable the pilot programs to document the following information in a standard manner: (1) The level of screening and assessment; (2) profiles of risk and family demographics; (3) the incidence of child abuse and neglect; (4) rates of child development; and (5) any other information the commissioner deems appropriate.

(f) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall report to the General Assembly on the establishment, implementation and progress of Healthy Families Connecticut, on January first and July first, of each year. The first report shall be due on January 1, 1996.

Sec. 3. Subsection (a) of section 17b-261 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof: (a) Medical assistance shall be provided for any otherwise eligible person whose income, including any available support from legally liable relatives and the income of his spouse or dependent child, is not more than one hundred forty-three per cent, pending approval of a federal waiver applied for pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, of the benefit amount paid to a person with no income under the aid to families with dependent children program in the appropriate region of residence and if such person is an institutionalized individual as defined in Section 1917(c) of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(c), and has not made an assignment or transfer or other disposition of property for less than fair market value for the purpose of establishing eligibility for benefits or assistance under this section. Any such disposition shall be treated in accordance with Section 1917(c) of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(c). Any disposition of property made on behalf of an applicant or recipient or his spouse by a guardian, conservator, person authorized to make such disposition pursuant to a power of attorney or other person so authorized by law shall be attributed to such applicant, recipient or spouse. A disposition of property ordered by a court shall be evaluated in accordance with the standards applied to any other such disposition for the purpose of determining eligibility. The commissioner shall establish the standards for eligibility for medical assistance at one hundred forty-three per cent of the benefit amount paid to a family unit of equal size with no income under the aid to families with dependent children program in the appropriate region of residence, pending federal approval, except that the medical assistance program shall provide coverage to persons under the age of nineteen born after September 30, 1983, up to one hundred eighty-five per cent of the federal poverty level without an asset limit. Such levels shall be based on the regional differences in such benefit amount, if applicable, unless such levels based on regional differences are not in conformance with federal law. Any income in excess of the applicable amounts shall be applied as may be required by said federal law, and assistance shall be granted for the balance of the cost of authorized medical assistance. ALL CONTRACTS ENTERED INTO ON AND AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ACT PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION SHALL INCLUDE PROVISIONS

FOR COLLABORATION OF MANAGED CARE ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE HEALTHY FAMILIES CONNECTICUT PROGRAM ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 17a-56, AS AMENDED BY SECTION 2 OF THIS ACT. The commissioner may, as permitted by federal law, extend by six months the eligibility for assistance or benefits under this section to former recipients of aid to families with dependent children who would otherwise become ineligible to receive such benefits or assistance due to the loss of federally applicable disregards on earnings. The Commissioner of Social Services shall provide applicants for assistance under this section, at the time of application, with a written statement advising them of the effect of an assignment or transfer or other disposition of property on eligibility for benefits or assistance.

Sec. 4. Section 4-67m of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof: (a) The Office of Policy and Management, in consultation with each budgeted state agency, shall develop, for state budgeting purposes, specific biennial goals and objectives and quantifiable outcome measures, which shall not be limited to measures of activities, for each program, service and state grant administered or provided by such agency. The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management shall submit an annual report concerning such goals, objectives and measures to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the joint standing committee having cognizance of matters relating to the agency. FOR THE BIENNIUM BEGINNING JULY 1, 1995, AND FOR EACH BIENNIUM THEREAFTER, THE ANNUAL REPORT SHALL INCLUDE AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF EACH PROGRAM, SERVICE AND STATE CONTRACT ON THE FAMILY. (b) The goals, objectives and measures developed for each such agency pursuant to subsection (a) shall be implemented for the biennium beginning July 1, 1993. The Office of Policy and Management, in consultation with each such agency, shall review and revise such goals, objectives and measures for each biennium thereafter. (c) For the biennium beginning July 1, 1995, and for each biennium thereafter, the annual report submitted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall evaluate the progress of budgeted state agencies in achieving benchmarks established under section 4-67r.

Sec. 5. Subsection (a) of section 10-29a is amended by adding subdivision (42) as follows: (NEW) (42) The Governor shall proclaim the second Sunday in September of each year to be Family Day. Suitable exercises shall be held in the State Capitol and elsewhere as the Governor designates for the observance of the day.

Sec. 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 1997.

Approved June 26, 1997