



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Connecticut Voices for Children Announces New Health Care Policy Staff**

#### *Children's Health Council staff join Voices*

Connecticut Voices for Children, Connecticut's leading statewide, research-based citizen advocacy organization for children and families, has announced the addition of new staff members who will expand the organization's work on health care issues. Connecticut Voices for Children welcomed Judith Solomon and Dr. Mary Alice Lee as Senior Policy Fellows. Prior to joining Connecticut Voices, Ms. Solomon and Dr. Lee served as Director and Assistant Director, respectively, of the Children's Health Council, which was refused funding in the latest state budget. Judith Solomon is one of the original co-founders of Connecticut Voices for Children, and she had served as Chair of Voices' Board of Directors. Prior to working at the Children's Health Council, she was Litigation Director at the Legal Aid Society of Hartford. Dr. Lee is also a member of the faculty at the Yale School of Public Health, where she teaches a course on Maternal and Child Health.

In their new roles at Voices, Ms. Solomon and Dr. Lee will continue their focus on reducing the number of uninsured children in Connecticut and on ensuring that children receive the health care services available to them in the HUSKY health insurance program. In particular, they will focus on reversing cuts to eligibility and benefits in the HUSKY program that were included in the most recent state budget. HUSKY is Connecticut's health insurance program for uninsured children, parents, and pregnant women in working families. Both will continue to work from their Hartford office, giving Connecticut Voices for Children, which has been based in New Haven, a physical presence in Hartford for the first time.

CT Voices for Children has received a grant of \$74,000 from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to assist with the Children's Health Council's transition and merger with Voices, and to facilitate Voices' growing involvement in the Hartford area. CT Voices has been invited to participate in the Foundation's Brighter Futures Initiative, which is aimed at improving the

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school readiness and success of Hartford's youngsters. Brighter Futures involves more than 30 organizations that focus on family support and parent education, child care and early childhood education, child and maternal health, and the early grades of school.

"We know that all children need access to adequate health care to succeed, and that failure to provide such care will cost us more in the long run," said Shelley Geballe, Co-President of Connecticut Voices for Children. "We are thrilled to have Judy and Mary Alice join our staff and help us to advocate more effectively for this goal."

"Thousands of children in the HUSKY program are in danger of losing health care coverage and benefits because of state budget cuts," said Judith Solomon, Senior Policy Fellow at Voices. "Through Connecticut Voices, we'll be working hard to make sure that does not happen."

Michael Sullivan, who had also worked with the Children's Health Council, has joined Connecticut Voices for Children as Communications Coordinator. Mr. Sullivan brings with him 10 years of experience in communications and social services in the areas of health education, human service advocacy, research, and direct services. Jill Skowronek, who had served as Director of Communications at Connecticut Voices, is now Managing Director of the new Ready, Set, Grow...CT Kids! project, a statewide communications and mobilizing campaign that promotes the goal of getting all children healthy and ready for kindergarten. Connecticut Voices is the lead organization in this campaign.

Since 1995, the Children's Health Council worked to increase enrollment in the HUSKY health insurance program and ensure access to health care for children enrolled in the program. The Council

- monitored the health care services that children in HUSKY actually received and worked with health plans, providers and community organizations to improve access to health care;
- provided assistance to families who needed help enrolling in HUSKY or getting health care services; and
- educated thousands of community organizations, providers, and consumers about HUSKY through the use of community outreach workers.

Funding for the Council was eliminated in the latest state budget.

Connecticut Voices for Children is a statewide, research-based policy and advocacy organization committed to promoting leadership, policy change, and investment on behalf of all of Connecticut's children and youth. For more information, see [www.ctkidslink.org](http://www.ctkidslink.org).

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Capitol Region devoted to building successful partnerships with donors and nonprofits to enhance the quality of life for people in our community. For more information about the Foundation, visit [www.hfpg.org](http://www.hfpg.org) or call (860) 548-1888.

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