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For Immediate Release

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Services Save Lives and Dollars

Southeastern Connecticut Parents Speak Out; UCFS Puts Clinic Plans on Hold

More than 60 families, clients and providers, along with State Representative Kevin Ryan, Representative-elect Tim Bowles and a delegate from U.S. Congressman Joe Courtney's office met at a Legislative Breakfast today to discuss the looming social services crisis that will result from rescissions statewide.

Hosted by Child & Family Agency of Southeastern Connecticut, The Arc New London County, United Community & Family Services and The Light House, the breakfast drew attention to the consequences of shredding Connecticut's Safety Net of social services.

Approximately a half-dozen family members spoke about the impact that state-funded services have had on the lives of their loved ones and urged legislators not to allow funding for human services to be cut in the upcoming Special Session of the legislature. One parent said her son is learning critical skills that will allow him to live independently, and she worries that service reductions now will cost the state exponentially later. She added that if her son isn't taught the essential skills needed to build an independent life, she "fears what will happen to him when I am no longer here." Several parents said they were fearful that service cuts will interfere with their own ability to maintain full-time employment; further, they are untrained to provide the services themselves.

Provider Nancy Cowser of UCFS noted that the agency had been planning to build a new \$4 million health center which would have created 100 temporary construction jobs as well as 20 permanent healthcare jobs upon completion. Given the uncertainty about the state budget, however, plans to build the health center have been put on hold.

The sponsor agencies employ a total of 771 people and serve 35,556 people.

NOTE: The Arc New London County is New London County's agency of choice for many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Located at 125 Sachem Street in Norwich, Connecticut, The Arc was established in 1952 by parents of children with intellectual disabilities to serve the citizens of New London County. Board of Directors: John Fournier, President; Enrico DeMatto, Vice President; Linda Rhodes, Secretary; Emily Fournier, Treasurer; Members: Dennis Starling, Client Representative, Shannon Aiello, Dawn DeCristofaro, Mary Ann Duchene, Alan Messier, Wendy Mis, Alice Munyan and Denise Walstra. Immediate Past President: Diane Aubin.