



April 14, 2011

The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Hearing on the Office of Victim Services

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

On behalf of Children's National Medical Center (Children's National), and as a member of the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence, I am requesting that the Committee on the Judiciary include \$9 million for victim services funding for the Office of Victim Services (OVS) in the District's FY 2012 budget.

Children's National Medical Center has served children and families in Washington, DC since 1870. Home to Children's Research Institute and the Sheikh Zayed Institute for Pediatric Surgical Innovation, Children's National is consistently ranked among the top pediatric hospitals by *U.S. News & World Report* and the Leapfrog Group. With 283 beds, more than 1,330 nurses, 550 physicians, 6 primary care health centers in the District and seven regional outpatient centers, Children's National is the only exclusive provider of pediatric care in Washington, DC and the surrounding region. Children's National has been recognized by the American Nurses Credentialing Center as a Magnet® designated hospital, the highest level of recognition for nursing excellence that a medical center can achieve.

The Freddie Mac Foundation Child and Adolescent Protection Center at Children's National is the only medical center in the District with a team of health professionals dedicated to victims of child abuse and their families, and one of the few hospitals in the country using a team approach to assessing and treating these victims, making it a Center of Excellence. In Children's FY 2010 (July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010), the Child and Adolescent Protection Center had nearly 3,400 patient visits, of which over 2,100 child abuse cases occurred in the District. Additionally, over 90 percent of these patient visits were Medicaid beneficiaries, making them ineligible for crime victim compensation for the services provided by the Child and Adolescent Protection Center.

Since 1997, the Child and Adolescent Protection Center has operated a Victims of Crime Assistance Program (VOCAP). VOCAP provides specialized services to a target population of children and adolescents, from birth to 18 years of age, who have been sexually victimized in the District. Specialized services are provided by Pediatric Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners and

child abuse pediatricians who conduct forensic medical examinations, as well as psychologists and clinical social workers who provide specialized mental health services.

OVS provides critical funding for the Child and Adolescent Protection Center. In total, over half of the Center's annual budget is funded by OVS through the Victim of Crime Act Formula Grant. The revenue generated by our services is minimal, leaving the Center with a budget gap annually. Thus, the grant support from OVS helps the Center meet its budget. While some services are covered by the Crime Victim Assistance Fund for eligible patients, the majority of pediatric patients have Medicaid or another form of insurance. In this case, crime victim compensation cannot be used, unless the specific service is not covered by the insurance. In both of these cases, reimbursement for the Center is small. The Child and Adolescent Protection Center cannot afford to absorb these cuts without reducing access to services for children in the District.

OVS funding cuts over the past few years have already had an impact on the Child and Adolescent Protection Center. In the past, OVS has provided funding to support continuing education of the pediatric sexual assault nurse examiners, a resource which has since been eliminated. Further, several of the Center's staff have been supported entirely by grant funding through OVS to include physicians and mental health service providers. Thus, any reduction in the OVS budget will impact the Child and Adolescent Protection Center's ability to provide comprehensive services for victims of child abuse in the District.

It is also important to note that the Child and Adolescent Protection Center is a part of the District's public safety infrastructure. The Center is the preferred site for children to be evaluated for suspected maltreatment as delineated in the District's Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) on Abuse and Neglect Memorandum of Understanding. The MDT includes members from the DC Metropolitan Police Department, the DC Office of the Attorney General, the Child and Family Services Agency, the US Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, Safe Shores, the DC Children's Advocacy Center, and Children's National. The MDT focuses on:

- the needs of the child victims of physical and sexual abuse;
- law enforcement, prosecution and related civil proceedings; and
- the needs of the family members who support the best interests of the child.

Thus, cuts to OVS impact the ability of the District's first responders to address the needs of children who have suffered or have been suspected of experiencing child abuse.

As you know, the Mayor's FY 2012 budget includes approximately \$6 million for OVS. It is critical that OVS receive an additional \$3 million to sustain and maintain existing victim services for District residents.

Please help ensure that the Council and the Mayor work to include \$9 million for victim services funding for OVS in the District's FY 2012 budget. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

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