

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Josh McCrossen and I am the Commissioner of Social Services of Wayne County. In that capacity, I wear two hats, one for DSS and one for the County Nursing Home. I am here to make 3 points:

First, I am not here just to ask for more money, although, like others, I wouldn't turn it down. No, I'm here to request that two very important mechanisms for determining how funds get allocated and spent remain in place. One of those mechanisms is the Flexible Fund for Family Services, the Triple F-S or Flex Fund. As part of the budget for OTDA, it represents the best chance to allocate funds to our local county needs, not based on a formula or siloed funding, but on needs we see in our local community, that change from year to year. This source of funding allows us to make the needed changes, to be quicker and more responsive. Please convey the message that this mechanism needs to remain intact.

The second of these mechanisms, and just as important, is the 65/35 matching Fund for Preventive Services. In the OCFS budget, this is a growing amount. Why? Because counties and local Departments of Social Services have come to realize that it is in their best interest to provide services in their local communities that keep kids out of institutions. This funding mechanism brings us the best of both worlds, county and state dollars saved by reducing costly institutional placements, while keeping kids in their homes and communities (which research shows is more effective at reducing future crime, drug use, violence and

other societal costs). With an 80% recidivism rate, OCFS facilities are too often institutional “pathways to prison” which beg for effective alternatives. The state acting as integral partner with the counties in this endeavor, is a wonderful example of a way to create positive change and a better future for us all – please let the governor and other decision-makers know how important it is to maintain this expanding partnership.

Second, with oversight responsibility for our County Nursing Home I would be remiss not to mention two areas: the important role that County Nursing Homes play in our long term care system and reimbursement concerns. Private Nursing Homes make their money primarily by tacitly screening their potential residents and focusing on short term stays, i.e. the most lucrative payors. County Nursing Homes not only take those less able to pay but are statutorily barred from refusing them. These are most often individuals who otherwise would be “stuck” in hospitals, costing New York State and the Medicaid program significant unnecessary costs. Reimbursement for county Nursing Homes needs to occur more quickly since the County taxpayer underwrites every dollar that is not reimbursed on a timely basis.

Third, and last, briefly, I thank the Governor and the Division of Budget for this opportunity to provide input. Such opportunities are often too infrequent, too short or too far to travel. I thank you for your time, your desire to invest New York’s fiscal resources wisely and your attention. I wish you well in your tasks ahead.