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Acting Governor Kim Guadagno Reaffirms Christie Administration's Commitment to Empowering Children with Disabilities During Visit to Hunterdon Healthcare Child Development Center

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Acting Governor Emphasizes Benefits of the State's Recent Transfer of Services for Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Trenton, NJ - Reaffirming the Christie Administration's commitment to increase awareness of childhood developmental disabilities, Acting Governor Kim Guadagno today toured the Hunterdon Healthcare Child Development Center in Flemington to see first-hand the programs in place for special needs children. The center provides children and adolescents diagnosed with learning difficulties, developmental delays or other special needs with important diagnostic testing and individualized treatment.

"Since taking office, the Christie Administration has acted on a commitment to expand initiatives and services for individuals with developmental disabilities, including those that are meeting the individual needs of children with development disabilities," said Acting Governor Guadagno. "Governor Christie is committed to empowering those with disabilities and seeing that they receive every opportunity to live full and productive lives."

Acting Governor Guadagno also spoke with the center's officials about the State's recent transition of services for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Beginning January 1, 2013, services were transferred from the New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Children's System of Care.

"The transition and creation of the Division of Children's System of Care establishes a simple single point of entry for families with children with developmental disabilities, and provides families access to a wider and comprehensive array of services to help meet their needs," said DCF Commissioner Dr. Allison Blake. "The new Division of Children's System of Care is now the departmental "home" for children with multiple needs, bringing together programs previously scattered throughout State government and providing a more family-centric approach."

"It's critical to make sure children and families that need important services are able to access them easily, and that includes making services available through a single point of contact," continued Acting Governor Guadagno. "Making multiple phone calls to scattered offices is inefficient and needlessly stressful. These transitional changes will streamline the process for families as they seek the care their children need."

The Hunterdon Healthcare Child Development Center is comprised of an interdisciplinary group of clinicians that provide comprehensive evaluations and services to children with special needs and their families. Programs serve infants, toddlers, pre-school and school-age children, and in some instances young adults (18-21 years). Services are provided by professionals in the fields of developmental pediatrics, clinical psychology, speech-language pathology, social work, pediatric physical and occupational therapy, nursing and audiology.

The center's individual programs include Pediatric Occupational and Physical Therapy, Pediatric Speech and Hearing Services, Early Intervention Program, Developmental Pediatric Associates, Educational Evaluations and Counseling, Hunterdon Regional Autism Center, and Special Child Health Services Case Management Unit.

"The children we treat have a range of issues, some minor and short-term; some have disabilities that will have a profound impact over their lifespan. We provide coordinated comprehensive services for children and their families

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within the context of our community. Our goal is that every child that comes through our doors will have every opportunity to thrive," said Carol Klein, M.A., CCC-S MPA, administrative director of Hunterdon Healthcare's rehabilitation services.

Governor Christie's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget reflects his ongoing commitment to provide critical programs and services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, including:

Increasing Resources for Community-Based Care to provide \$41.8 million of new State and federal funding to develop additional community placements and services, for a projected 788 individuals. An additional \$21.3 million is proposed to pay for placements that occurred during Fiscal Year 2013 and a total of \$19.7 million in new State and federal funding will support the Division of Developmental Disabilities' Olmstead initiatives.

Increasing Funding for Support Services for Children with Developmental Disabilities through the continued integration of programs under the new Division of Children's System of Care in the Department of Children and Families. An additional \$1.5 million has been provided in the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget for placement services.

Identifying, Diagnosing and Caring for Children with Autism by providing \$86 million for the Early Intervention Program, aimed at identifying, diagnosing and caring for children from birth to age three with autism and other developmental disabilities.

Providing Transition Services for Adults. The Christie Administration has dedicated funding for young adults with developmental disabilities who age out of the Department of Education's special education entitlement by ensuring a seamless transition to the Department of Human Services' adult day-programming.

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