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## Lt. Governor Guadagno Joins Families of Grant Recipients to Raise Awareness for Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund

Wednesday, December 17, 2014

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**Trenton, NJ** – Continuing the Administration's celebration of its Season of Service, Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno today met with the families of children who have received grants from the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund (CICRF) in the State House to share their stories and educate other families in need about the CICRF.

CICRF grants provide financial assistance to applicants with costly medical bills associated with their child's illness that are not covered by health insurance. In the first half of Fiscal Year 2015, CICRF has already awarded more than \$3.6 million in grants to 369 applicants.

"When a child has a catastrophic illness, the last thing the family should be worrying about is the cost of life-saving treatments," said Lt. Governor Guadagno. "The Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund supports and protects families that have run out of options and offers a lifeline so that they can get back to what is really important – the health and happiness of their children."

The Hansen family of Old Bridge attended the event today and shared their experiences working with CICRF. When their son Ryan was two years old, a large blood vessel ruptured in his brain, requiring emergency treatment.

"When Ryan suffered from a brain aneurysm, he stayed in the hospital for 4 1/2 months. Our insurance only covered some of his hospital stay, and none of his surgeries were covered. We were left with hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical bills. Our family is very fortunate to have the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund lift the burden off of us and pay Ryan's medical expenses," said Mr. Chris Hansen.

Dennis Rosenthal, father of six-year-old Moria Rosenthal of East Windsor, also shared his gratitude for the financial assistance his family received through CICRF.

"After three years of cancer treatments at several different medical institutions, we had a huge mountain of medical bills. It was devastating that we had this to worry about on top of our daughter's dire medical situation," said Mr. Rosenthal. "With no way to pay these bills, we were concerned that our daughter would be denied life-saving treatment, and we would have to declare bankruptcy. That is when we found the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund. Not only did they have the resources to help us, but also, they genuinely cared about what we were going through. They were determined to eliminate the financial stress we were under, and to let us concentrate on getting Moria better. There is nothing in this world that could have done more for us."

CICRF is a dedicated, revolving, non-lapsing trust fund collected from an annual contribution of \$1.50 per employee for all employers operating under the New Jersey Unemployment Compensation Law. Since its establishment by statute in 1988, CICRF has distributed more than \$160 million in grants to 7,644 families.

"Our commission members are committed to fulfilling the mission of the fund. The fund exists to provide financial relief for families facing devastatingly high uncovered medical expenses for their children regarding their income," said Dr. Janice Pronnicki, Chairperson of the CICRF Commission. "We hope that today's event will make more families aware that they may be eligible for help from the Fund for the cost of their child's necessary medical treatment, equipment

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and other expenses."

CICRF defines a catastrophic illness as any sickness or condition, acute or chronic, for which expenses are incurred that are not fully covered by insurance, state or federal programs or other sources. New Jersey residents with children who have uncovered medical expenses may apply for grants to reimburse specific, documented, medically-related costs. Families are eligible if they have lived in New Jersey for at least three months prior to the date of application, if the child was 21 years or younger when the expenses were incurred and if expenses exceed a certain percentage of the family's income.

For more information about the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund, visit [www.njcatastrophicfund.org](http://www.njcatastrophicfund.org) or call 1-800-335-FUND (3863).

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