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## Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno Highlights Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund as Vital Lifeline for Families

Thursday, January 2, 2014

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### *Nearly \$5 Million Dispersed for Uncovered Medical Expenses Benefiting More Than 260 Families*

**Trenton, NJ** – Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno today joined with grant recipient families of the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund (CICRF) to educate other deserving families about its resources and to encourage them to access the Fund.

CICRF grants provide financial assistance to families with costly medical bills associated with their child's illness that are not covered by health insurance. More than 260 families received nearly \$5 million in grants for the first half of the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget. The Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund Commission is on track to help more families this fiscal year than ever before in its history.

"For families, a child with an illness can be overwhelming and the cost for that child's medical care – treatment a child may need to live – can quickly exceed a family's income and deplete their entire life savings," said Lt. Governor Guadagno while meeting with the families in the Governor's outer office. "The Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund can lend a hand when a family has run out of all other options."

CICRF was established in 1988 and has distributed more than \$ 154 million in grants to 6,798 families. In Fiscal Year 2013, nearly 8 million was distributed to 448 deserving families.

Families with children who have uncovered medical expenses may apply for grants to reimburse specific, documented, medically-related costs. Applications are investigated, authenticated and reviewed by the Fund's Commission for grant disbursement.

"Our commission members are truly privileged to do the meaningful public service of providing significant financial relief for families of all incomes throughout the state who have utilized a wide range of medical care for their children," said Dr. Janice Pronnicki, Chairperson of the Commission. "We hope that after hearing these inspirational stories, other families in need will be encouraged to seek help from the Fund with the high costs of necessary medical treatment and equipment."

Under the CICRF's guidelines, a catastrophic illness is 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. 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 10% of the family's income up to \$100,000 or 15% of any income over \$100,000.

"In our first experience with the Catastrophic Fund, we found the process to be efficient and everyone was extremely helpful", said Stacy Tuttle, whose family received a grant for medical expenses including the cost of a home modification to improve accessibility for their six year old daughter Ava. "Our consultant was a pleasure to work with, was always informative, and helped to educate us. We are truly grateful for what the Catastrophic Fund was able to do for our family"

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. For more information about the

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Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund or to apply online, visit [www.njcatastrophicfund.org](http://www.njcatastrophicfund.org) or call 1-800-335-FUND (3863).

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