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More Than 260 Families with High Uncovered Medical Expenses for Their Children Received Nearly \$3.6 Million in Grants for First Half of 2013 Fiscal Year

Trenton, NJ – Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno today joined with families who received grants from the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund (CICRF) to educate other deserving families about the Fund and encourage them to access the Fund's resources.

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 \$3.6 million in grants for the first half of the Fiscal Year 2013 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 with a child with a catastrophic illness, the cost for that child's medical care – medical care 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 \$146 million in grants to 6,383 families. In Fiscal Year 2012, over \$7.0 million was distributed to 436 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 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," said Dr. Janice Pronnicki, the Commission's chairperson. "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 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.

"The Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund has enhanced the quality of life for our son, Gabriel," said Jose Barro of Asbury in Hunterdon County, whose family received a grant for medical expenses including a specialized bed and feeding chair for their seven year old son. "With the grant, we were able to purchase a modified safety bed. This grant has not only provided a much needed safe sleeping environment, but it has also given us peace of mind. We truly appreciate the helpful, compassionate staff at the CICRF. They helped us through our difficult time."

Gabriel has a neurological condition that affects his mobility and medical conditions that impact his breathing and gastrointestinal functioning.

Michael Schneider, the father of ten year old Ian from Phillipsburg, was also at today's event. Ian is diagnosed with a degenerative neuromuscular condition that affects voluntary, independent movement.

For more information about the Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund, visit njcatastrophicfund.org or call 1-800-335-FUND (3863). Applications can be submitted electronically.

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.

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