



Testimony of

Joan Siegel
Senior Policy Associate
Health and Mental Health
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc.

Before the
New York City Council
Health Committee

Regarding the New York City
Preliminary Plan Budget Proposals for FY10

March 25, 2009

My name is Joan Siegel and I am the Senior Policy Associate for Health and Mental Health at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC). CCC is a 65- year old privately supported, independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization. CCC does not accept or receive public resources nor do we provide direct service or represent a sector or workforce; rather for 65 years we have undertaken public policy research, community education and advocacy activities to draw attention to what is or is not for working for children in New York and to advance budget, legislative, and policy priorities—all with the goal of ensuring that children are healthy, housed, educated and safe. I would like to thank Chairs Rivera and Weprin, along with the members of the Finance and Health Committee for this opportunity to testify on the Mayor's Preliminary Plan for City Fiscal Year 2010.

While we appreciate the severity of the budget crisis, Mayor Bloomberg's Preliminary Plan for CFY10 does not go far enough to protect New York City's children from shouldering a disproportionate burden of the economic downturn. During economic downturns, like the unprecedented one we are in the midst of, it is more important than ever that the core services for children and families be protected and supported. Yet the Mayor's Preliminary Budget proposes \$231 million in reductions to services for children and families on top of \$12.4 million in reductions approved in the November Plan, which go into effect in FY10. Such reductions are in addition to the loss of \$72 million in city funds at budget adoption in June 2008 and the loss of \$4.9 million in city funds in November 2008 for children and family services in the current year that are not restored for next year.

We are especially concerned about the impact the Preliminary Plan would have on the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). ACS is the emergency responder for children in this city, and for many families in need ACS is a place to turn when other city services are no longer available. As such, we believe that ACS should have been held to the same standard as the Police Department and Fire Department (as well as the Corrections and Sanitation Departments which also received lower PEG targets.) While the proposed budget protects core child protective and child abuse prevention services, ACS received troubling reductions that may well impede the agency's ability to ensure that children are safe either in their homes or in foster care. These proposed reductions include 608 staff layoffs (with a staffing reduction of almost 1000 with attrition), the reorganization of the Family Preservation Program, a 5% reduction in administrative payments to foster care agencies and a 10% reduction to foster parent supports.

In addition, it is more important than ever that the agencies that protect the health and well-being of struggling New Yorkers have the resources to help and support families. Proposed budget cuts reduced needed services-- after school programs, children's dental clinics, school based health services and summer youth employment programs. Furthermore, the severe budget shortfall in ACS's child care program must be addressed so that low income parents can remain in the workforce. We ask that the Council negotiate a budget with the Mayor that protects services for children and families that are cost-effective, preventing more costly interventions in the long-term.

A balanced approach to weathering this economic storm is essential - as it would be impossible to cut our way out of the city's budget deficit. We believe that progressive tax increases must be implemented, as they were after the September 11th attacks. As such, we support Council Speaker Quinn's proposal to increase income taxes for the city's highest earners making over \$250,000 and we oppose the Mayor's proposal to

raise the city's sales tax and eliminate the year-round exemption for clothing and footwear. We think the Speaker's proposal could go further by using a portion of the revenue raised to protect essential services for children and families. In December 2008, CCC commissioned a poll that found that 73% of New York voters supported raising income taxes for those earning over \$250,000 over reductions in government services.

In addition to measures the City can take to raise revenue to protect core children's services in the short and long term, we are thankful for the Federal Stimulus Package and the work of the Mayor's office (and other city elected and appointed officials) to secure this temporary funding for the City. We urge the City Council to work with the Mayor's office to ensure this funding is used to not only close budget gaps, but to restore the highest priority proposed PEGS and expand programs that help the children and families suffering due to the troubled economy. CCC is committed to advocating that the City receives a fair share of federal stimulus money from the state, particularly for education, child care, Head Start, foster care and youth service programming.

We understand that budget reductions will be made so as you work with the Mayor and fellow Council members on budget reductions, we urge you to be strategic and deliberate, and to avoid across the board reductions. Funding for cost-effective programs and services that prevent child abuse, keep children safe, ensure children are housed, fed and clothed, and funding that goes directly to classrooms must be preserved. CCC supports funding for the CEO initiatives to expanding access to healthy foods and for School based Health and Reproductive Health Centers.

With regard to the specific proposals of concern outlined in the Mayor's January Financial Plan for FY10, CCC asks that the following reductions be restored, either with federal stimulus money or through the budget negotiation process. These health care cuts disproportionately impact low income, underserved areas.

- **Restore \$2.5 million for the Oral Health Program for 35,000 dental visits for children annually** (November 2008 Plan to be implemented FY10.). This program is nearly 100 years old results in 35,000 visits a year. It is one of the few preventive health measures for children. The program's goal is to ward off dental problems by serving elementary school children in a targeted manner - grades 1, 3 and 5. Children are served in their school, which means that they are more likely to get the care as their parents do not need to take off from work. According to the CDC, a child is 5 times more likely to have dental problems than to have asthma and 7 times more likely than hay fever. The CDC reports that school based sealant programs work to prevent dental problems and that this is verified by scientific studies. Thus, CCC urges that these clinics remain open.
- **Restore \$960,000 for HHC Child Health Clinics** - Child Health Clinics are "community-based, locally accessible primary care" for children ages 0 to 19. (Voices from the Community, issued 2008 by Commission on the Public's Health Systems at page 5). Located in low-income areas, these clinics fill a necessary role for children. At a time when the economy is suffering, parents are losing jobs (and thus health insurance) and there are increases predicted on the Medicaid and Child Health Plus rolls, continued funding of these health clinics for children is imperative. [Greater detail is provided below in discussion of HHC on new cuts announced last week].

- **Restore \$2.7 million primary care capacity initiative** – Last year the City Council reported that the 62% of the City's zip codes had inadequate number of primary care physicians. Primary care doctors provide an entry into the health care system, can screen children for developmental delays, and develop trust relationships as they work closely with families on health issues.
- **Full restoration for Council Initiatives including \$3.5 million for the infant mortality initiative, \$3.0 million for obesity prevention initiatives and \$545,000 for asthma control.**
 - **Infant Mortality** Although infant mortality is down, it continues to rise in some areas including East Harlem (5.0 to 8.4), East Tremont (5.0 to 6.2); and Bedford-Stuyvesant (9.1 to 9.7) and parts of Queens. It is premature to reduce funding for this critical service and imperative that the City continues to fund these initiatives.
 - **Obesity Prevention and Podiatric Screening Initiative.** At a time when the City is campaigning for healthy foods, calorie counts and fitness, it is counterintuitive not to fund both Obesity Prevention Initiatives (such as the NYU Body Project, SPARK and Health Corps.) and the Podiatric Screening Initiative. Mayor Bloomberg stated on March 4, 2009 that obesity is "probably the only public health issue that is getting worse." Aggressive campaigns, such as the "stop smoking" campaign demonstrate that more funding, properly placed, can ameliorate health conditions. Lower IQ, lower math and reading scores and problems with attention and short-term memory have been linked to students being obese and unable regulate their blood sugar.
 - **Asthma:** In late 2008, New York State created an initiative to reduce truck emissions in the Bronx because, despite the overall Citywide drop in Asthma rates, the Bronx rates are 4 to 5 times the state average. Although the City has done a fair job of combating asthma, it still remains a serious concern. The Journal of Epidemiology and Community health reported last may that asthma is the leading cause of admission to hospital among children under 15 in New York City. The Asthma Initiative helps to combat pests in high need areas that lead to asthma (such as cockroaches) and provide prevention and screening at Pre-K and Head Start programs.

These programs contribute to improved health and quality of life for children and, for these reasons, should be sustained.

Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC):

CCC is alarmed by the reductions in service that were announced by HHC last week in response to the State budget proposals and the State's failure to pass through a fair share of FMAP Stimulus Funds. In particular, we are concerned about the closing of the Adolescent Mental Health Day Treatment Program, the four community clinics that serve children, and the four school-based mental health programs. The four clinics slated for closure are all child and family health clinics, which serve over 11,000 children and families. Coney Island, an underserved area, would lose all of its school based mental

health clinics under this plan. At a time when unemployment is going up, the City can ill afford to close clinics serving children. CCC is urging the state to provide NYC with its fair share of the increased FMAP funds from the federal stimulus package and to ensure its inpatient rebasing rates reimburse HHC equitably. While we surely join the City in this advocacy, we urge the Council and the Mayor to ensure that if the State fails to adequately support children's health and mental health needs, that the City step in and protect these critical HHC services.

In conclusion, we understand that these very difficult times require difficult decisions on both sides of the budget ledger – revenue and expense. New York' City's budget deficit demands a thoughtful response that includes progressive tax increases and government spending reductions that do not impact core services for children and families. It is critical that the actions the City Council takes with the Mayor protect the city's ability to ensure that our children remain healthy, housed, educated and safe.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



**Fiscal Year 2010 Preliminary Budget for New York City
Proposes \$231 Million in Reductions to Services for Children and Families**

CHILD WELFARE

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10	Failure to Fund Council Initiatives
<i>Elimination of 293 administrative and child care staff</i>		<i>\$7.6 million</i>	
<i>Elimination of 315 child welfare personnel</i>		<i>\$8.2 million</i>	
<i>Reorganization of Family Preservation Program/saving 234 staff</i>		<i>\$7.3 million</i>	
<i>5% Reduction to Foster Boarding Home Administrative Rate for Foster Care Providers</i>		<i>\$5.7 million</i>	
<i>Community Partnership Initiative not to be expanded (remain at 11 instead of 15)</i>		<i>\$930,000</i>	
<i>Reduce Agency Support contracts (suspend MSW program, eliminate media campaigns, etc.)</i>		<i>\$1.8 million</i>	
<i>Foster Parent Support-10% reduction to providers that have not met performance goals</i>		<i>\$909,000</i>	
<i>Eliminate Facility Maintenance Expense (turn over facility to private provider)</i>		<i>\$218,000</i>	
<i>CEO: Individual Development Accounts for Foster Youth</i>	<i>\$206,000</i>		
<i>Child Safety Initiative: Preventive Services Caseload Reduction</i>			<i>\$3.7 million</i>
<i>Child Advocacy Centers</i>			<i>\$500,000</i>
<i>Family Justice Centers</i>			<i>\$200,000</i>
<i>CONNECT Domestic Violence program</i>			<i>\$600,000</i>
Sub-Total	\$206,000	\$32.7 million	\$5.0 million

EARLY CARE/CHILD CARE

Program	Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10	Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10	Failure to Fund Council Initiatives
<i>Priority 7 child care slots</i>		<i>\$7.1 million</i>	
<i>Provider's Choice-Family Child Care Supplies</i>			<i>\$1.2 million</i>
<i>Working Parents for a Working New</i>			<i>\$300,000</i>

<i>York</i>			
<i>CEO: Early Childhood Policy and Planning</i>		\$58,000	
<i>Sub-Total</i>		<i>\$7.2 million</i>	<i>\$1.5 million</i>

EDUCATION

<i>Program</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10</i>	<i>Failure to Fund Council Initiatives</i>
<i>Reduce 1,440 Pedagogical Employees in Schools</i>		\$91.2 million	
<i>Estimated Headcount Reduction from State Cut - 13,930 positions</i>		Only if state cut is implemented	
<i>CEO: Early Childhood Policy and Planning</i>		\$72,000	
<i>Universal Pre-kindergarten (full day in ACS programs)</i>			\$2.6 million
<i>Teacher's Choice</i>			\$13 million
<i>Dropout Prevention and Intervention</i>			\$2 million
<i>Urban Advantage</i>			\$500,000
<i>Sub-Total</i>		<i>\$91.3 million</i>	<i>\$18.1 million</i>

HEALTH SERVICES

<i>Program</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10</i>	<i>Failure to Fund Council Initiatives</i>
<i>CEO: Expand Access to Healthy Foods</i>	\$182,000		
<i>CEO: School Based Health and Reproductive Health Centers</i>	\$1.4 million		
<i>Child Health Clinics</i>		\$960,000	
<i>Diagnostic & Treatment Center Funding</i>		\$473,000	
<i>Primary Care Capacity Initiative</i>		\$2.7 million	
<i>Supplemental School Health Services</i>		\$754,000	
<i>Infant Mortality Initiative</i>			\$3.5 million
<i>Obesity Prevention Initiatives</i>			\$3.0 million
<i>Podiatric Screening</i>			\$500,000
<i>Asthma Control Initiative</i>			\$545,000
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$1.6 million</i>	<i>\$4.9 million</i>	<i>\$7.5 million</i>

HOMELESS SERVICES

<i>Program</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10</i>	<i>Failure to Fund Council Initiatives</i>
<i>HomeBase Homelessness Prevention Program</i>		\$5.1 million	

<i>Eliminate Recreation Staff from Shelter Contracts</i>		<i>\$2.4 million</i>	
<i>Elimination of direct social service staff in commercial hotels housing homeless families</i>		<i>\$1.1 million</i>	
<i>Rate reduction to Family Hotels</i>		<i>\$575,000</i>	
<i>Eliminate Homecare Kits for Families</i>		<i>\$354,000</i>	
<i>Eliminate Clothing Bank Contract</i>		<i>\$221,000</i>	
<i>Citywide Homeless Prevention Fund</i>			<i>\$250,000</i>
<i>Sub-Total</i>		<i>\$9.7 million</i>	<i>\$250,000</i>

HOUSING

Program	<i>Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10</i>	<i>Failure to Fund Council Initiatives</i>
City-Task Force on Housing Court			\$500,000
Community Based Consultants			\$830,000
CEO: Family Self-Sufficiency Program		\$2.1 million	
Sub-Total		\$2.1 million	\$1.3 million

JUVENILE JUSTICE

<i>Program</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10</i>	<i>Failure to Fund Council Initiatives</i>
<i>Discharge Planning/In-Detention Services</i>			<i>\$640,000</i>
<i>Sub-Total</i>			<i>\$640,000</i>

LEGAL SERVICES

PROGRAM	<i>Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10</i>	<i>Failure to Fund Council Initiatives</i>
Citywide City Legal Services			\$1.5 million
Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT)			\$500,000
Legal Services for Working Poor			\$1.0 million
Legal Services NYC- Keeping Families Together			\$300,000
MFY Legal Services			\$100,000
SSI-UI Advocacy Program			\$1.3 million
Anti-Eviction Legal Services			\$2.3 million
Sub-Total			\$7.0 million

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

<i>Program</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10</i>	<i>Failure to Fund Council Initiatives</i>
<i>Mental Hygiene – Community Based and other Non-HHC providers</i>		<i>\$1.1 million</i>	
<i>HHC Mental Hygiene Services</i>		<i>\$869,000</i>	
<i>Mental Health Treatment for Children Under Five</i>			<i>\$1.6 million</i>
<i>Autism Awareness Initiative</i>			<i>\$1.6 million</i>
<i>Sub-Total</i>		<i>\$2.0 million</i>	<i>\$3.2 million</i>

SOCIAL SERVICES

<i>Program</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10</i>	<i>Failure to Fund Council Initiatives</i>
<i>Nutrition for Adults and Families Living with HIV/AIDS</i>		<i>\$491,000</i>	
<i>Food Stamps at Farmer's Markets</i>			<i>\$270,000</i>
<i>Emergency Food Programs</i>			<i>\$2.1 million</i>
<i>CEO: Employment Services for Non-Custodial Parents</i>		<i>\$380,000</i>	
<i>CEO: Enhanced Employment Services</i>		<i>\$111,000</i>	
<i>Sub-Total</i>		<i>\$980,000</i>	<i>\$2.3 million</i>

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

<i>Program</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10</i>	<i>Failure to Fund Council Initiatives</i>
<i>Reduction in SYEP summer jobs slots</i>		<i>\$2.0 million</i>	
<i>Consolidate OST Middle Schools into Beacons Program</i>		<i>\$149,000</i>	
<i>Elimination of OST Option II</i>		<i>\$6.0 million</i>	
<i>Reduction in OST Summer Program</i>		<i>\$2.86 million</i>	
<i>Increase in OST Low Performance Penalty</i>		<i>\$570,000</i>	
<i>CEO: Youth Programs</i>	<i>\$14.3 million</i>		
<i>Beacon Opening Fees</i>			<i>\$3 million</i>
<i>Transfer of Social Services Funding from NYCHA</i>	<i>\$12.3 million</i>		
<i>Cultural After School Adventure (CASA)</i>			<i>\$5.5 million</i>
<i>Institute for Student Achievement</i>			<i>\$1.35 million</i>
<i>Helping Involve Parents in Schools Project (HIP)</i>			<i>\$4.3 million</i>
<i>Shelter Beds for At-Risk Runaway and</i>			<i>\$1.7 million</i>

<i>Homeless LGBT Youth</i>			
<i>Street Outreach/Neighborhood Youth Alliance</i>			<i>\$1 million</i>
<i>The After-Three Program</i>			<i>\$3.8 million</i>
<i>Sports and Arts in School Foundation</i>			<i>\$1.2 million</i>
<i>YMCA Virtual Y Program</i>			<i>\$500,000</i>
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$26.6 million</i>	<i>\$11.3 million</i>	<i>\$22.3 million</i>

TOTAL

PROGRAM	<i>Proposed Expenditure Increase FY'10</i>	<i>Proposed Expenditure Decrease FY'10</i>	<i>Failure to Fund Council Initiatives</i>
<i>ALL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN</i>	<i>\$28.4 million</i>	<i>\$162.2 million</i>	<i>\$69.1 million</i>