MEMORANDUM

ECLEG NOV26'13 P12:41

To: Legislator Tom Mazur, Chair, Health and Human Services Committee
From: Carol Dankert-Maurer, Commissioner of Social Services
Re: 2014 Erie County Budget
Date: November 26, 2013

The Department of Social Services is working to improve child safety in Erie County. We are currently undertaking a review to strengthen current practice within the local child protection system. These actions will improve our ability to investigate allegations of abuse or maltreatment. Although these changes will improve the department's ability to react to accusations, it does nothing to address the causes of abuse and neglect within our community.

The Department of Social Services is requesting $25,000 be added to our Professional Services Contracts and Fees line within the 2014 budget to study chronic neglect and offer solutions. This study will give the department guidance on how to proactively address this serious issue. As I told the Health and Human Services Committee earlier this year, there are more reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment to the New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment from Erie County than our comparable counties. ECDSS is committed to furthering our practice and offering more to these families with great challenges. This will be one part of our agenda of solutions tailored for our community, one of the poorest cities in our nation.

Thank you for consideration of this request.