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NEW FEDERAL REPORT ENCOURAGES STATES TO ADOPT DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING PROGRAM SIMILAR TO CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S HELP ME GROW MODEL

HARTFORD, Conn. - A new [joint policy statement](#), released by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, includes a recommendation for states to adopt a centralized intake, screening and referral process, specifically naming our Help Me Grow[®] system model.

The report, which encourages greater collaboration between federal home visiting programs and federally-required state early intervention programs, states that the adoption of a system model, such as *Help Me Grow*, would serve as an “effective way to ensure that families have timely access to appropriate services that meet their needs.”

Help Me Grow was developed by our Paul Dworkin, MD, in 1997 and has now been implemented by 28 affiliates that are leading more than 52 *Help Me Grow*[®] systems, around the country. The [Help Me Grow National Center](#), based at [Connecticut Children's Medical Center](#), provides technical assistance, and leads a vibrant and dynamic network of leaders that contribute to the national agenda on comprehensive early childhood system building.

The report notes that *Help Me Grow* is a “non-federal system that assists states in identifying children at risk for developmental and behavioral concerns and then helps families find community-based programs and services. *HMG* is a system that helps to build collaboration across sectors, including health care, early care and education, and family support.”

“It is exciting to see a local, innovative, system model that was piloted 20 years ago in Hartford now being diffused throughout the country and recommended as a strategy to achieve collective impact,” said Paul Dworkin, MD, executive vice president for community child health at Connecticut Children's and founding director of the *Help Me Grow* National Center. “We are deeply appreciative of the transformative and systemic reform made by the administration to promote and fund innovative strategies that ensure expanded focus on vulnerable children and linkage to community programs.”

“*Help Me Grow* is a system model that provides a framework for ensuring all children and their families are linked to the services and supports needed to thrive,” said Kimberly



Martini-Carvell, executive director of the *Help Me Grow* National Center. “This policy statement endorses that screening should not happen independent of an integrated system of care that has a strong ability to link children and families to effective services.”

The *Help Me Grow* National Center is part of the Connecticut Children's [Office for Community Child Health](#), which is dedicated to promoting the optimal healthy development of all children.

About Connecticut Children's Medical Center

Connecticut Children's Medical Center is the only hospital in Connecticut dedicated exclusively to the care of children. Connecticut Children's is a nationally recognized not-for-profit with a medical staff of more than 1,000 providing comprehensive, world-class health care in more than 30 pediatric specialties and subspecialties. Connecticut Children's Medical Center is the primary pediatric teaching hospital for the UConn School of Medicine and Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University as well as a research partner of Jackson Laboratory. Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health is a national leader in community-based prevention and wellness programs.

To learn more about Connecticut Children's Medical Center, please visit connecticutchildrens.org.

About the Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health

Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health serves as a coordinating entity for the Medical Center's community-oriented programs and as an incubator for innovative models that strengthen the community child health system and enhance children's optimal healthy development. The Office currently oversees thirteen community-oriented programs, including the Help Me Grow® (HMG) National Center and Easy Breathing©. Both HMG, which promotes early detection and connection to services for children at risk for developmental and behavioral problems through a centralized telephone access point, and Easy Breathing©, a community-based asthma management program, were piloted in Hartford before being scaled up and adopted in many states. The Office for Community Child Health extends the impact of such innovative programs regionally and nationally through the creation of replicable, evidence-informed models of care. For more information on all of the Office for Community Child Health's programs and services, visit www.connecticutchildrens.org/community-child-health.