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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Children's Services Awarded \$3.75 Million in Grants to Further Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Work

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) is pleased to announce the receipt of two grant awards from the federal government totaling \$3.75 million, funding that will further support our ongoing work to improve outcomes for young people and families involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The awards consist of a two-year \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) for a Juvenile Reentry Demonstration Program, with the aim of reducing recidivism. And, a five-year, \$3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded to both ACS and Montefiore Medical Center, to build a regional partnership for New York City to improve child welfare outcomes among substance abusing families.

The U.S. Department of Justice grant will enable ACS to partner with the Center for Court Innovation—a non-profit organization which aids victims, reduces crime and improves public trust in justice—to develop a structured, strengths-based community reentry and continuum of aftercare services for youth returning from juvenile justice placement to their New York City neighborhoods. The goal of the project is to improve youth outcomes and reduce recidivism.

ACS and the Center for Court Innovation will develop a strategic plan and implement reentry/aftercare program sites in Upper Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island that provide comprehensive, individualized services to youth and families. The project will establish Community Advisory Boards and Reentry Councils to engage the community in addressing reentry planning and service coordination for individual young people.

"On behalf of ACS, I would like to thank OJJDP for awarding us this grant and recognizing our efforts and ideas for improving New York City's juvenile justice system," said Gladys Carrion, ACS Commissioner. "With the Center for Court Innovation, we will use this funding to pilot a program that will ultimately benefit the well-being of our court-involved young people, their families, and the communities to which they will return."

"The Center for Court Innovation is excited to be collaborating with ACS on this important project," said Greg Berman, Director of the Center. "Funding from OJJDP will enable us to deepen community collaborations and expand services at our Youth and Community Justice Centers to help young people make successful transitions back to their homes, schools, and communities."

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant will allow ACS and Montefiore Medical Center to establish a regional partnership that fosters collaboration to improve child welfare outcomes. This collaboration will involve governmental agencies, child welfare providers, substance abuse treatment programs, and service providers (employment, housing, legal, mental health, etc.), each of whom will coordinate to address the needs of each family.

Additionally, the grant will allow Montefiore to enhance their Family Treatment/Rehabilitation (FT/R) program by delivering three treatments that have been proven effective:

- Seeking Safety: a trauma-informed therapy intended to reduce the risk of inter-generational trauma and substance abuse
- Incredible Years: a series of parenting skills workshops that help parents to become more effective and reduce the likelihood of harsh discipline.
- Contingency Reinforcement: a practice reinforcing healthy behaviors, including attendance at treatment and abstinence.

Families involved with Montefiore's FT/R program receive a comprehensive family assessment, intensive case management, ongoing monitoring and supportive service referrals.

“Montefiore is excited to participate in this regional partnership to improve child welfare,” said Scott Wetzler, Ph.D., vice chairman, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Montefiore Medical Center. “Substance abuse represents a major threat to children’s well-being, and improved collaboration between treatment providers, child welfare providers, governmental agencies and the courts will be critical to ensuring the safety of children. We hope to use the lessons we learn in the Bronx to help providers and children throughout New York City.”

“As an agency, we are continuing to work to refine our policies and practices to improve the outcomes for families involved in the child welfare system,” said Commissioner Carrión. “In partnership with Montefiore, this grant will allow us to establish a network of resources that will enable the necessary collaboration and community involvement to assist those families who struggle with substance abuse, and ensure that they receive the necessary help and treatment services.”