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PRESS RELEASE

Manchester Police, CHR and CHDI Collaborate to Implement REACT, A Program to Reduce Traumatic Stress in Children of Arrested Parents

Manchester, CT – Representatives from the Manchester Police Department, Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI), and CHR (Community Health Resources) highlighted an innovative new program to reduce and address the trauma and stress placed on children when a parent is arrested. REACT (Responding to Children of Arrested Caregivers Together) is a cross-systems collaborative involving law enforcement, Emergency Mobile Psychiatric (EMPS) behavioral health clinicians and child welfare services. Manchester is the second community in Connecticut to pilot REACT.

"The parent of a child is arrested in Connecticut more than 60,000 times a year," said Dr. Jason Lang, Associate Director at CHDI and lead developer of the REACT model. "We know that the arrest of a parent may result in ongoing emotional or behavioral concerns. REACT was developed to address the needs of this often-overlooked population of children."

The Manchester police department has been working in partnership with CHR, a leading behavioral health provider, to implement this exciting model.

"Our department has a long history of working to address underlying issues with regards to victimization, and this initiative is congruent with that philosophy. Most importantly, this initiative is aimed at protecting one of the most vulnerable populations in our community, its children," explained Captain Christopher Davis. "The REACT program puts in place vital resources to support these children and provides another important avenue for partnership with our local mental health providers to best support the needs of the community."

Data shows that young children are particularly vulnerable when separated from a parent, particularly when this separation occurs suddenly or unexpectedly. In fact, 50% of the children of incarcerated parents are under the age of 9. This vulnerability is often compounded by other stress in these children's lives. REACT provides a coordinated and systemic way to reduce the trauma felt by children during an arrest, as well as address the emotional needs of children during and immediately following a parent's arrest.

"REACT is an innovative new program that brings the needs of children to the forefront so that they are supported and cared for during extremely challenging times in their lives," said Amy Evison, LMFT, Senior

Program Director at CHR. “This coordinated response helps to assess and address the impact of the potentially traumatic event and connect children to additional and ongoing supports, making their well-being the focus.”

The REACT model was developed by researchers at CHDI and is funded by the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy at Central Connecticut State University. Statewide partners include the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, the Connecticut Alliance to Benefit Law Enforcement (CABLE), the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the Connecticut Department of Correction. More than 650 law enforcement, child welfare and EMPS therapists have been trained in Manchester, Waterbury and at regional REACT trainings offered across the state.

Additional information on REACT can be found at <http://www.chdi.org/ccep-initiatives.php?type=current#i19>.

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