**Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund Commission**

**Open Minutes**

**February 7, 2024**

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson J. Prontnicki at 9:30 a.m.

J. Prontnicki announced that in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, the specifics as to time and place of this meeting were sent to the Office of the Secretary of State and the Department of Personnel for filing and posted on the official bulletin boards provided by those offices for notice of public meetings. Also, notices were prepared for two newspapers to inform the public of this meeting.

J. Prontnicki conducted a roll call of members as follows:

**Present:**

Janice Prontnicki, Chairperson

Phyllis Shanley Hansell, Vice Chairperson

Jeffrey Carrick

Adam Neary (for Lisa Asare)

Kidanemariam Meshesha

Manuel Paulino

Carl Underland

Anthony Valenzuela

Howard Weinberg

**Absent:**

Ralph Condo

**Guest:**

Caroline Gargione, DAG

**Staff:**

LorieAnn Wilkerson-Leconte, Deputy Executive Director

Amy Taklif, Senior Analyst

Janet Valentin-Forte, Secretary to the Commission

John Fallucca, Fiscal

**Adoption of Agenda:**

J. Prontnicki made a motion to adopt the proposed meeting agenda for the February 7, 2024 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comments:**

None.

**Approval of Minutes of December 2023 Meeting:**

J. Prontnicki moved to approve the open meeting minutes from December 6, 2023, as presented. The motion passed with 7 votes in favor. A. Neary abstained due to absence from the meeting. K Meshesha abstained, as he was a guest at said meeting

J. Prontnicki made a motion to approve the closed meeting minutes from December 6, 2023, as presented. The motion passed with 7 votes in favor. A. Neary abstained due to absence from the meeting. K Meshesha abstained, as he was a guest at said meeting.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

L. Wilkerson-Leconte reported that the Commission will review 26 applications, including 19 eligibles, 5 ineligibles, 1 appeal, and 1 reconsideration, with potential payments totaling $686,495.09. There is an estimated $20.4 million in the Catastrophic Illness and Children Relief Fund which is sufficient to cover the applications being heard at this meeting. $5.6 million are remaining in the fiscal 2024 budget after all payments for today's commission meeting are made. The State Office budget reflects 1.6 million dollars remaining for fiscal year 2024.

**Fund Operation’s Report:**

Since July 1, 2024, the State Office received 193 applications. Currently, staff are processing 55 applications and there are 0 that are unassigned, with the oldest application received on August 4, 2023.

**Executive Director’s Report:**

L. Wilkerson-Leconte updated the Commission on the status of the new application portal project. PruTech will present a demo to the Commission during this meeting. The projected “go-live” date is March 1. A link to the test portal site will be shared with the Family Advisory Committee parent advisors, State Office staff, special child health case managers, and select colleagues from DOH and DCF to solicit their feedback, before the portal’s soft launch.

L. Wilkerson-Leconte also informed the Commission that the Department of Treasury Auditors returned to the state office, On January 24, 2024, to conduct a compliance follow-up review. assurance check of the previous audit, looking for compliance completion. Finding only minor calculation discrepancies, the State Office was allowed to provide within 24 hours. The post-visit assessment is pending.

J. Fallucca reported that the Office of Information and Technology and the Office of Management and Budget approved the Microsoft CRM upgrade project on February 1, 2024.

**Outreach Report:**

L. Wilkerson-Leconte highlighted that there have been at least four outreach events that the state office attended. The State Office presented a detailed overview and training of the Fund and its new CRM upgrade, at the Special Child Health Services Quarterly Case Manager’s meeting on December 12, 2023. Feedback from the meeting was overwhelmingly positive. As a result, communication between the state office and case managers has increased. The State Office will offer a “Lunch and Learn” series in the Spring for case managers, to provide Fund updates and ongoing partnership development.

Under the supervision of the State Office, Parent Advisor Katie Neustadter (a public relations professional) volunteered to be the new social media content creator. On behalf of the Commission, J. Prontnicki extended thanks to the parent volunteers for their efforts to spread the word about the Fund.

**Closed Session:**

At 10:10 a.m., J. Prontnicki made a motion to go into closed session for the new application portal demonstration and to review applications. The motion passed unanimously.

**Review of Applications:**

**Appeal:**

J. Prontnicki made a motion to uphold the appeal as ineligible. P. Shanley-Hansell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Eligibles:**

J. Prontnicki made a motion to approve the eligible applications, as presented, except for #235262023. A Neary seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Reconsiderations:**

J. Prontnicki made a motion to approve the reconsidered applications, as presented. A. Valenzuela seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Ineligibles:**

J. Prontnicki made a motion to approve the ineligible applications, as presented. H. Weinberg seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

J. Prontnicki made a motion to adjourn the meeting. All Commission members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:12 a.m.