



The State of Connecticut



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 31, 2023

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COMMISSIONERS BARTON REEVES & NAVARRETTA TO HONOR CONNECTICUT FATHERS WITH CRITICAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

HARTFORD – In honor of Father’s Day, and as partners in the *Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative* (CFI), the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) are co-sponsoring an event for CFI network partners, the state’s mental health, behavioral health and substance use prevention/recovery provider network and other stakeholders. The event will offer a day of learning and sharing about the DSS/DMHAS project to apply the Strategic Prevention Framework for capacity-building in DSS-certified fatherhood programs.

The Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative (CFI), is a statewide multi-agency collaboration, led by The “2023 Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative Summit: *Illuminating the Path to Relational Health*” will be held June 1, 2023, at the Mystic Marriott Hotel & Spa in Groton from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The summit will focus on mental health and recovery. Policymakers, providers, and other stakeholders will share information about efforts to enhance supports in these areas to fathers participating in programming across the state, highlight fathers as critical forces in their children’s lives and how state systems are working to assist with the important role they play.

“Children are and have always been at the center of our efforts. However, in order for children to reach their full potential, we recognize that we must provide supports to both of their parents” said **Anthony Judkins, Program Manager for the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative**.

The Summit will feature a public awareness video project produced by the *Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative* called the *Dear Dad Tour*. The *Dear Dad Tour* is a collaborative effort of



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Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative partners, the Department of Social Services (DSS) and American View Productions (AVP), a marketing and promotions agency.

“Strengthening services to support fathers and their families will lead to better outcomes for the health and safety of children,” **Governor Ned Lamont** said. “The Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative is making strides to assist fathers through multiple programs and interventions while addressing barriers in practices that hinder their full involvement in their children’s lives.”

“Fathers play a vital role in the development of a child’s life, so what better way to celebrate their influence ahead of Father’s Day than by highlighting parenting supports, programs, and resources available to them,” **DSS commissioner Andrea Barton Reeves** said. “The ultimate goal of CFI is to show fathers that Connecticut stands with them and wants them to succeed as a parent to ensure their child has the brightest future possible. Just as it is with parenting, collaboration is essential to success, which is why I am thankful to Commissioner Navarretta and all the services DMHAS is able to provide with DSS to offer fathers the support they need.”

“With fathers recognized as one of our children’s most influential role models, the importance of their partnership in prevention cannot be understated,” said **DMHAS Commissioner Nancy Navarretta**. “Families that are affected by Substance Use Disorders typically have needs beyond the scope of one single program, which is why partnerships and relationships with other community providers such as housing, employment services, mental health care, substance use treatment and peer support are crucial.”

Since 1999, the CFI has been improving systems that can enhance fathers’ ability to be positively involved in the lives of their children. This public awareness campaign shares compelling fatherhood stories of men, women and children throughout the state to bring attention to the activities of the *Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative* as people explain what fatherhood means to them and how we can be affected by the presence or absence of our fathers.

More information can be found on the *Dear Dad* Tour website at www.deardadtour.org

Representatives from all three branches of state government, local nonprofit agencies serving fathers and families and fathers involved in programming across Connecticut have been invited to attend.



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For more information about the *Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative*, please visit <https://portal.ct.gov/fatherhood>