AMCHP Urges Congress to Support These Priorities for Maternal and Child Health in the Next COVID-19 Relief Package

Additional Resources for the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant

Due to COVID-19, there are already gaps being felt in Maternal and Child Health services, with additional resources needed to address these issues both now and in the aftermath of the immediate crisis. These range from delays in initial newborn hearing and bloodspot screening to concerns about increased risk for injuries at home such as window falls or drownings, adherence to childhood immunization schedules and developmental screenings to adequate nutrition.

States need additional Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant funding in order to meet the maternal and child health needs being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic including supporting transition to telehealth services, assuring timeliness of screening and follow-up for heritable disorders and hearing, providing critical information to pregnant women and new mothers, and ensuring access to medication and equipment for children with special health care needs.

CDC’s Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Moms and Babies Initiative.

Congress should immediately provide $100 million to fully fund the Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Moms and Babies initiative. The Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies program is a sustainable framework for monitoring the unique impacts of public health emergencies on pregnant women, infants, and children. The core focus of the program is a coordinated system of pregnancy and infant public health surveillance and data analysis that views mother and baby as a unit. This enables researchers to more rapidly identify emerging threats to pregnant women and understand impacts on both mothers and infants through childhood.

With this data, CDC can work with public health and clinical organizations to quickly provide guidance to families and health care providers on ways to reduce risk to mothers and babies and tailor interventions to improve their long-term health. As COVID-19 continues to spread, monitoring of its impact on pregnant women, infants, and children will be imperative.

Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

MIECHV is more important now than ever, as families who already faced complex needs have been thrust into chaos due to COVID-19. Home visitors are a critical link of support for families who are facing a variety of challenges that will be exacerbated by this crisis. With public health at risk and the social safety net in higher demand, these professionals are working overtime to deliver services to families in an unprecedented environment and through creative means. Congress should immediately provide $100 million in supplemental funding for the MIECHV program to train home visitors to deliver services through technology that enables home visits from a distance, as well as tangible needs for families including technology, formula, diapers, etc.

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