President Signs COVID-19 Relief Bill with MCH Priorities

On Mar. 11, President Biden signed into law the latest COVID-19 relief bill, the American Rescue Plan Act (H.R. 1319), which has a top-line funding level of $1.9 trillion and includes several priorities for maternal and child health and public health infrastructure. Major provisions to support maternal and child health and public health infrastructure more broadly include:

1. A new Medicaid state option for states to extend Medicaid coverage to 12 months postpartum. See details below;
2. $150 million in emergency supplemental funding for the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. For details, see pages 44-45 of this summary;
3. $50 million in emergency supplement funding for the Title X Family Planning Program; and
4. $7.66 billion to establish, expand, and sustain a public health workforce. For details, see page 14 of this summary.

Summary of the New State Option for Postpartum Medicaid Extension

The American Rescue Plan Act includes a provision to support state efforts to extend Medicaid coverage to 12 months postpartum by creating a new Medicaid state option to pursue this policy. To take advantage of this new state option, states must 1. Provide full Medicaid benefits during pregnancy and throughout the 12-month postpartum period; 2. Provide such benefits to all individuals covered by Medicaid during pregnancy (e.g., regardless of eligibility pathway or diagnosis of a given health condition); and 3. Apply such coverage to all postpartum individuals with CHIP coverage in those states that extend coverage to pregnant individuals under CHIP. The new state option becomes available to states effective April 1, 2022 and remains available for a 5-year period. The policy does not include an enhanced FMAP; states would receive their standard federal matching rate for this coverage extension.