Federal Emergency Preparedness Legislation

On Sept. 25, the House passed H.R. 6378, the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2018 by voice vote. This is a reauthorization of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, more commonly known as PAHPA. H.R. 6378 is similar to the Senate version of the reauthorization, S. 2852, which passed the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in June 2018. It is unclear at this time when the Senate will consider its version on the Senate floor. A summary of maternal and child provisions included in H.R. 6378 is copied below.

Sec. 303: Encourages the director of at-risk individuals within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response to incorporate appropriate data and information relevant to detecting emerging public health threats that may affect at-risk individuals, such as pregnant and postpartum women and infants, into the existing situational awareness and biosurveillance network at the CDC.

Sec. 304: Codifies and continues the work of the Children’s Preparedness Unit at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure the needs of children are taken into consideration when preparing for and responding to public health emergencies.

Sec. 305: Reauthorizes the National Advisory Committee on Children and Disasters through 2023. Requires the committee to include at least one member with expertise in children and youth with special health care needs as well as at least one member with expertise in the needs of parents or family caregivers of children with disabilities.

Sec. 705. Requires the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response and the Assistant Secretary for the Administration on Children and Families to report to Congress within 14 days of enactment of the bill with a formal strategy relating to reunifying children with parents and guardians who were separated as a result of zero tolerance policy.

Sec. 706. Requires the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response and the Assistant Secretary for the Administration on Children and Families to send weekly reports to Congress on the status and welfare of children who were separated from parents and guardians as a result of zero tolerance policy.

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