

## **FRIENDS of the TITLE V MATERNAL and CHILD HEALTH PROGRAM**

March 13, 2008

Dear Senator Dodd:

As organizations committed to improving the health of America's women, children, and families, we urge you to support full funding for the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant. Full funding at the authorized level of \$850 million will enable all states and territories to provide vital public health and health care services to millions of women, infants and children, including children and youth with special health care needs.

The MCH Block Grant is the only Federal program that focuses solely on improving the health of all of our nation's mothers and children. State and territorial health agencies and their partners use MCH Block Grant resources to reduce infant mortality, deliver services to children and youth with special health care needs, support prenatal and postnatal care, screen newborns for genetic and hereditary health conditions, deliver childhood immunizations, and prevent childhood injuries. MCH Block Grant funding assists states in addressing critical health workforce needs, including the training of health professionals, and supports the development and testing of innovative public health practices.

State and territorial MCH programs coordinate their work with Medicaid agencies, state Special Supplemental Nutrition Programs for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and other programs serving vulnerable and at-risk populations. This collaborative work assures that every dollar is used to provide necessary services without duplication to underserved mothers, children, and families in your state.

Six years ago, funding for the MCH Block Grant was \$731 million and has remained flat or has decreased ever since. The FY 2008 omnibus appropriations bill cut MCH Block Grant funding to \$666 million, the lowest level since 1993. Five years of cuts have curtailed progress in improving the health of mothers, children, and families. Full funding for the MCH Block Grant will allow states to efficiently meet increased demand for public health and health care services in their communities.

We strongly urge you to fully fund the Title V MCH Block Grant at \$850 million. Your support of this vital program is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Public Health Association

Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of State & Territorial Health Officials  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
Autism Society of America  
CityMatCH  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Dental Health Project  
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children  
Easter Seals  
Epilepsy Foundation  
Family Voices  
Families USA  
First Focus  
IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) March of Dimes Foundation  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care  
National Center for Children in Poverty  
National Child Abuse Coalition  
National Healthy Start Association  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
Nurse-Family Partnership  
Prevent Blindness America  
The Arc of the United States  
The Children's Defense Fund  
The Children's Health Fund  
United Cerebral Palsy