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