Increase Funding for the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant

The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs calls on Congress to fund the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant at $660 million for FY 2019.

The MCH Block Grant, authorized by Title V of the Social Security Act, is the only federal program of its kind devoted solely to improving the health of all women and children and is guided by the principles of evidence, flexibility, and results. It serves more than 76 million people, including over 57 million children and 3 million pregnant women.

Although funding for the MCH Block Grant has slightly increased in recent years, it is still funded at $79.6 million less than in FY2002, when the program was funded at $731.3 million. This reduced investment comes at a time when the United States has the 4th highest infant mortality rate among 34 OECD countries and low birth weight and preterm births continue to be serious and costly.

Additionally, racial and ethnic disparities persist across several indicators, with black infant mortality rates double the rates for white infants. At the same time, Title V programs are being called upon to invest additional resources to address emerging issues such as the Zika virus and opioid epidemic.

AMCHP supports sustained funding that will enable states to:

- Reduce infant mortality
- Improve the health of the population through prevention initiatives
- Help newly insured individuals access appropriate health care
- Improve state systems and infrastructure
- Continue to provide wrap-around supports, medical homes, and family-centered, community-based systems of care for children and youth with special health care needs
- Partner with other agencies, schools, and youth organizations to prevent behaviors that place youth at risk
The MCH Block Grant improves the health of America’s women and children by:

- **Supporting programs that work:** An analysis by the Office of Management and Budget found that MCH Block Grant-funded programs helped decrease infant mortality rates, prevent disabling conditions, and increase access to care for uninsured children.

- **Addressing the growing needs of women, children, and families.** As our health care system undergoes a massive transformation, the flexible nature of the MCH Block Grant is an invaluable resource for states to use to address the most pressing needs of MCH populations, while maintaining high levels of accountability and utilizing evidence-based strategies.

- **Supporting other federally funded programs such as home-visiting, community health centers, Healthy Start, WIC, autism initiatives, CHIP, and Medicaid.** The MCH Block Grant invests in needs assessments, planning and policy development, quality assurance, and development of health promotion initiatives and information systems that complement health care services and promote prevention. Close coordination with other health programs assures that funding is maximized and services aren’t duplicated.

Another key component of the MCH Block Grant is the Special Projects of Regional and National Significance (SPRANS). SPRANS funding complements and helps ensure the success of state Title V, Medicaid and CHIP programs driving innovation and building capacity to create integrated systems of care for mothers and children.

Examples of innovative projects funded through SPRANS include guidelines for child health supervision from infancy through adolescence (i.e. Bright Futures); nutrition care during pregnancy and lactation; recommended standards for prenatal care; successful strategies for the prevention of childhood injuries; and health safety standards for out of home childcare facilities.

**Additional Information**
For additional information, including state-specific MCH profiles, contact the AMCHP Policy and Government Affairs Team at (202) 775-0436 or ahaddad@amchp.org.