September 12, 2017

Dear Chairman Brady, Ranking Member Neal, Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Davis,

The Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) and Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) thank you for your leadership and commitment to the success of the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program. As organizations representing leaders in state public health agencies, and maternal and child health specifically, many of our members are responsible for administering the MIECHV program and/or complementary programs in their states.

We commend your efforts to reauthorize MIECHV for five years to give states and territories the stability necessary to ensure continued success of the program. We are strongly opposed, however, to Section 9 of the amendment in the nature of a substitute to HR 2824, which would create for the first time a matching requirement of grantees.

A majority of states and territories do not have the resources to match their MIECHV grants with state investments in MIECHV-eligible home visiting programs. With many states facing significant budget shortfalls, we are concerned that states would be unable to predict the long-term viability of continuing the program in absence of knowing what the state budget for eligible matching funds would be over the next several years. State health departments are already required to provide a match along with a maintenance of effort for their Maternal and Child Health Services Block grants, demonstrating their commitment to the vulnerable populations served via the Title V program. Some state funds currently being invested in home visiting may already be used as state match for other federal funds, and it is not clear if they would be eligible to count for more than one program.

We are pleased to provide feedback on other provisions of the legislation at your request, but felt it important to reiterate our strong opposition to a state match requirement due to how this provision would jeopardize the future of the MIECHV program in many of our member states and territories. Thank you again for your support of vulnerable families who benefit currently and will benefit in the future from a strong MIECHV program.

Sincerely,

Lori Tremmel Freeman  
CEO  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Michael R. Fraser, PhD, MSMSL, CAE, FCPP  
Executive Director  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials