WOMEN AND CHILDREN’S HEALTH ADVOCATES DECRY IMPACT OF SEQUESTRATION ON NATION’S WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

WASHINGTON – Four of the nation’s leading women and children’s health and advocacy organizations issued statements today highlighting the adverse impact sequestration will have on the well-being and quality of life of women, infants, children and families in the United States and called on Congress to protect these priorities.

A national sign-on letter – signed by 53 maternal and child health organizations – was delivered to Capitol Hill today urging Members of Congress to take a balanced approach to sequestration that fully protects the health of women, children and their families. A copy of the sign-on letter can be found at the end of this media release.

STATEMENTS

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

“Sequestration will cut needed federal funding for children’s health programs at a time when poverty rates are higher than they have been in decades and millions of families are struggling to make ends’ meet,” said Robert W. Block, MD, FAAP, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics. “All adults once were children, and strong financial investments in children’s research, health care and prevention programs will help keep our children healthy, provide the foundation for adult health, and lower overall health care costs for years to come. We simply cannot afford to put the health of our country at further risk by cutting funding for such critical programs.”
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)

“Sequestration would devastate our public health system’s ability to provide critical care to women and children in need,” said Dr. James Breeden, MD, FACOG, President of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. “Healthy babies depend on healthy moms. Prenatal care helps prevent pre-term birth and a host of other complications. Millions of women rely on federally-funded programs for their basic health and prenatal care, programs already struggling. Further cuts would jeopardize access and the health of these women, and would ultimately cost more in treatments for conditions that could have been caught early or prevented altogether.”

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)

“Sequestration will undoubtedly impact the lives of women, children and families,” said Michael Fraser, PhD CAE, Chief Executive Officer of Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs. “The Joint Chiefs are quick to share the impact of sequestration on our military readiness. Health leaders have to do the same for public health readiness and the overall well-being of all Americans. The current caps established by the Budget Control Act, combined with the state budget cuts and proposed cuts in FY13 federal funding, create a perfect storm. States simply cannot continue to absorb these cuts without catastrophic consequences. Sequestration means access to crucial public health and health care services will be diminished, clinics serving vulnerable populations will close and jobs will be lost. This is why we implore Congress to take a balanced approach to deficit reduction that does not rely on further cuts to non defense discretionary programs.”

March of Dimes

“Sequestration will result in 30,000 children and 20,000 adults not receiving life-saving immunizations,” said Dr. Jennifer L. Howse, President of the March of Dimes. “As parents prepare their children for the new school year, we risk the return of deadly illnesses such as measles and whooping cough—threats to our children virtually eliminated in the United States. Every dollar spent on childhood vaccines saves our health care system $16.50 in future medical costs. Saving programs like this is a sound investment in our future.”

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (The College), a 501(c)(3) organization, is the nation’s leading group of physicians providing health care for women. As a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization of approximately 56,000 members, The College strongly advocates for quality health care for women, maintains the highest standards of clinical practice and continuing education of its members, promotes patient education, and increases awareness among its members and the public of the changing issues facing women’s health care. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a 501(c)(6) organization, is its companion organization. [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org)

The Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs is a national resource, partner and advocate for state public health leaders and others working to improve the health of women, children, youth and families, including those with special health care needs. To learn more about AMCHP, visit [www.amchp.org](http://www.amchp.org).

The March of Dimes is a national voluntary health agency whose volunteers and staff work to improve the health of infants and children by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. Founded in 1938, the March of Dimes funds programs of research, community services, education and advocacy. For the latest resources and information, visit [marchofdimes.com](http://marchofdimes.com) or [nacersano.org](http://nacersano.org).
Dear Member of Congress:

As you prepare to finalize the fiscal year 2013 budget, we urge you to act to avoid sequestration, currently scheduled to take effect on Jan. 2, 2013, in a way that fully protects the health of women, children and their families. The 53 undersigned organizations, dedicated to improving the health of women, children and their families, agree fully with the many members of Congress from both parties who have expressed their opinion that sequestration would be devastating to the nation. We strongly urge a balanced approach to deficit reduction that does not include further cuts to non-defense discretionary programs; these critically important programs have already done their part to reduce the deficit.

It is in the best interest of our nation to ensure that children are born healthy and have the opportunity to grow up and lead productive lives. Healthy Americans are stronger on the battlefield, have higher academic achievement and are more productive on the job. Ensuring that every child is given a healthy start in life is imperative to achieving our goal of a thriving, safe and healthy country.

Sequestration would eliminate nearly one billion dollars in federal funding for research and programs designed to promote and protect the health of women and children – jeopardizing the progress we have made in addressing many of the most serious health and medical challenges facing our county – including infant mortality, preterm birth, injuries and childhood obesity. Specific examples illustrating the impact of sequestration are the following:

- More than 750,000 mothers and infants will be cut from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women and Children (WIC).
- Public health education about sudden infant death syndrome prevention, preconception care, STDs and family planning, access to oral health care, breast feeding, childhood obesity and linking families to services will be slashed
- States will lose capacity to address the leading causes of birth defects, as well as maternal and child deaths, and will be unable to support regionalized systems of care for medically fragile newborns
- Life-saving immunizations would be denied to 30,000 children and 20,000 adults. The nation will risk a resurgence of deadly threats that have been virtually eliminated in the United States, including measles and whooping cough
- Research on costly diseases and conditions affecting women and children would be significantly cut at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
- Access to pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists will be threatened as fewer training slots would be available through the Children’s Hospital Graduate Medical Education program

Sequestration would devastate our public health system, impeding our ability to cure diseases and ensure that children are born healthy and go on to lead productive lives. We strongly urge
you to work together to find a balanced approach to deficit reduction that does not target non-defense discretionary programs for any additional cuts.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association on Health and Disability
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Nurses Association
American Pediatric Society
American Public Health Association
American School Health Association
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
Association of Immunization Managers
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Association of State & Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Beckett Family Consulting
Children's Dental Health Project
Children's Hospital Association
CityMatCH
Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning
Coalition for Health Funding
Easter Seals
Family Voices
First Candle/SIDS Alliance
Genetic Alliance
Global Alliance to Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials
National Birth Defects Prevention Network
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Fragile X Foundation
National Healthy Start Association
National Partnership for Women & Families
National WIC Association
National Women's Health Network
Nurse Family Partnership
March of Dimes
Preeclampsia Foundation
Prevent Child Abuse America
RESULTS: The Power to End Poverty
Safe States Alliance
Shape Up America!
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
Trisomy 18 Foundation