

# POLICY STEPS the Next President and Congress Can Take to Improve the Health of Women, Children, and Families

## A 100 DAY POLICY AGENDA

created by the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs



### ***As the new President and Congress take office in 2009,***

the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) offers the following recommendations to help guide a policy agenda that can begin in the first 100 days to improve the health of all women, children and families, including those with special health care needs.

AMCHP is the association that supports state maternal and child health programs and provides national leadership on issues affecting women and children. For over 70 years, state directors of programs for maternal and child health and children with special health care needs have worked with a wide range of public and private partners to improve the health of families. We promote family-centered, culturally and linguistically competent, community-based systems of care for all families in the nation.

## Reauthorize SCHIP, Expand Health Insurance Coverage, and Improve Access for Mothers, Children and Families

**To improve health care access,** Congress should promptly reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) with adequate funds for states to cover all eligible children, expand coverage as appropriate, and cover pregnant women without needing a waiver.

**To expand health insurance coverage,** Congress should pass and the President should sign legislation assuring guaranteed quality, affordable, and adequate health insurance for all Americans.

**To promote family-centered, community-based, coordinated care for children, particularly those with special health care needs,** the Congress and President should include provisions in health reform legislation or a separate bill that provide incentives and standards for the expansion of medical homes consistent with the principles established by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

## Expand Access to Affordable Family Planning Services

**To expand access to effective family planning and reproductive health services,** Congress and the President should expand Medicaid coverage to women of childbearing age to include family planning services and comprehensive maternity care (including preconception care and extended postpartum care) for low-income women without needing a Medicaid waiver.

Congress should also make contraceptives more affordable for women and men by allowing state Title V funded programs to participate in the 340 B Drug Pricing Program.

## Support the Integration of Behavioral and Physical Health Services

**To support the development of networks and the integration of behavioral and physical health services,** Congress should increase funding to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to expand Project LAUNCH and other efforts to improve access to mental health and substance abuse services for pregnant women, mothers, and children.

## Fully Fund the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant

**To increase access to quality maternal and child health services,** the Congress and President should propose and pass a budget including full funding of \$850 million for the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant. This program is currently funded at \$666 million. The MCH Block grant allows states to provide services that:

- reduce infant mortality and the incidence of preventable diseases and disabling conditions among children;
- promote the health of mothers and infants by providing prenatal, delivery, and postpartum care for low income, at-risk pregnant women;
- promote the health of children by providing preventive and primary care services for low income children; and
- provide and promote family-centered, community-based, coordinated care for children with special health care needs and facilitate the development of community-based systems of services for such children and their families.

## Expand Healthy Start

**To target resources to communities with high incidence of infant mortality,** the Congress and President should increase the appropriation for the Healthy Start Program to \$300 million so that all eligible communities can be funded.

## Implement the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act

**To improve and expand comprehensive state newborn screening systems,** Congress and the President should provide funding at the authorized level of \$24 million to implement the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act passed in 2008.

## Increase Funding for the Combating Autism Act

**To improve screening and services for children with developmental disabilities,** Congress and the President should increase funding to the authorized level of \$210 million to implement the Combating Autism Act.

## Increase Funding for the PREEMIE Act

**To expand studies on the biological, medical, and socio-economic factors associated with preterm birth,** Congress and the President should increase funding to the authorized level of \$13 million. Each year, more than a half million babies are born preterm and cost the nation over \$26 billion.

## Support Family Planning Programs Through Title X

**To provide high-quality family planning services and other preventive health care to low-income or uninsured individuals who may otherwise lack access to health care,** Congress and the President should increase funding of the Title X Family Planning Program to \$700 million.

## Invest in Prevention through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**To increase the availability of preventive and health promotion services for all states and communities,** the Congress and President should make strategic investments in the budget of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, particularly in the areas of adolescent and school health, birth defects and developmental disabilities, chronic disease, immunization, injury prevention, HIV and STD prevention, and tobacco control.

**To avert counter-productive limits or cuts in essential services,** the President should direct the Secretary of HHS to withdraw recent Medicaid regulations that adversely affect children, particularly children with special health care needs, including the August 17, 2008 directive issued by CMS limiting state SCHIP expansions.

**To protect access to health services and information,** the President should direct the Secretary of HHS to withdraw the recently promulgated "Provider Conscience" regulation.

## PUBLIC HEALTH LEGISLATION

### Reauthorize and Strengthen the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

**To assure quality nutrition services to mothers and children,** Congress should reauthorize the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) in accordance with recommendations made by the National WIC Association and provide \$6.63 billion in funding.

### Reverse the Obesity Epidemic

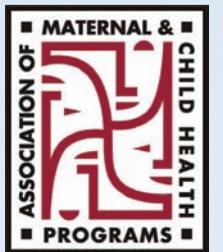
**To address the rampant national obesity epidemic,** Congress and the President should create an interagency task force to develop and be accountable for implementing a national plan to halt and reverse the obesity epidemic, and pass legislation authorizing resources for states to develop and test public health approaches to promote healthy eating and active living.

### Address Childhood Injuries

**To address the leading cause of death in children,** Congress and the President should develop and fund a national program to reduce childhood injuries by expanding state programs that implement evidence-based injury prevention programs and policies.

## MCH LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES

**To create a national agenda for improving maternal and child health,** the President should convene a White House Conference on Children. This conference would mark the centennial anniversary of the first White House Conference on Children held in 1909, and assure broad stakeholder involvement to create and implement an agenda to improve the health of women, children, and families over the next five to ten years.



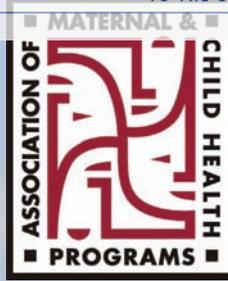
# A 100 DAY Policy Agenda



OBAMA-BIDEN TRANSITION PROJECT

THIS DOCUMENT WAS PRODUCED BY AN OUTSIDE PARTY AND SUBMITTED TO THE OBAMA-BIDEN TRANSITION PROJECT.

*The following recommendations were created by AMCHP's Legislative and Health Care Finance Committees, and approved by our Board of Directors. For additional information, please call Brent Ewig in AMCHP's Policy and Government Affairs department at (202) 775-0436.*



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## OUR MISSION

AMCHP supports state maternal and child health programs and provides national leadership on issues affecting women and children.