



July 29, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leaders McCarthy and Schumer:

We are writing on behalf of the Home Visiting Coalition Steering Committee to thank you for your leadership in addressing the needs of families during the COVID-19 pandemic and to elevate the role of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program in supporting the nation's most vulnerable children and parents through this crisis. The clear evidence of home visiting's effectiveness has earned MIECHV strong, consistent bipartisan support, and we hope to see that tradition continued in the final agreement on the fourth COVID relief package.

Throughout the pandemic, home visitors have continued to provide essential remote and drop-off services that are a lifeline to families with young children. These critical services also come with increased costs and requirements for service providers. The legislative flexibility and one-time investment of \$100 million for MIECHV that was included in the HEROES Act are essential to allow home visitors to support families through the pandemic.

Specifically, the following provisions in the House-passed bill would remove regulatory barriers and provide much-needed funds to allow home visitors to meet emergency family needs:

- **\$100 million one-time appropriation for MIECHV** to support home visitors in delivering remote home visits via teleconferencing and to address immediate family emergency needs resulting from the pandemic. including connectivity, formula, diapers, cleaning supplies, etc.
- **Allow virtual visits to be considered home visits** through the end of the calendar year to safely preserve valuable relationships without being penalized for an inability to safely enter homes during the pandemic.

- **Maintain all funding for and staffing levels of MIECHV programs** to preserve the existing home visiting infrastructure regardless of potential temporary enrollment or visit reductions due to coronavirus.

As families that already faced complex challenges have been thrust into chaos by COVID-19, MIECHV is more important than ever. Home visitors are a critical link of support for families facing a variety of obstacles that have been exacerbated by this crisis. With public health at risk and the social safety net strained, these professionals are working overtime to creatively deliver services to families in an unprecedented environment.

Home visitors need immediate flexibility and additional resources to continue to do their jobs through the pandemic. MIECHV-funded programs have been pivoting to accommodate new ways of reaching families, including expanding telehealth and virtual home visits, but they must have the certainty that these visits are covered by the MIECHV program. Our community is committed to preserving the invaluable relationships that have already been established between home visitors and families and to making sure families get the information and help they need to stay healthy and safe during this unprecedented crisis.

The Home Visiting Coalition Steering Committee appreciates attention to these critical needs and is available as a resource as Congress continues to develop legislation to provide relief during this crisis.

Sincerely,

The National Home Visiting Coalition Steering Committee

American Academy of Pediatrics
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)
Association of State and Tribal Home Visiting Initiatives (ASTHVI)
First5 California
First Five Years Fund
First Focus Campaign for Children
Healthy Families America
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI) USA
Nurse-Family Partnership
Parents as Teachers