

## **CHIP and MIECHV Organizational Sign on Letter to the Illinois Congressional Delegation**

As advocacy organizations and service providers deeply committed to the well-being of young children, families, and communities in Illinois, we strongly urge you to quickly pass extensions of both the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the federal home visiting initiative known as the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program. Both of these programs expired September 30, causing uncertainty for families, as well as for the providers and state agencies who serve them.

CHIP and MIECHV are vitally important to young children and families in Illinois. CHIP provides \$496.8 million for an estimated 326,000 Illinois children who are part of the larger umbrella All Kids Program, which affords health care coverage for approximately 1.5 million children. All Kids and CHIP ensures that these children have access to preventative care including well-child visits, developmental screenings, immunizations, behavioral health and dental care. As a result of bipartisan support for CHIP, the uninsured rate for Illinois' children is just 2.5%, among the lowest in the country. Illinois has been able to reach such a low uninsured rate for children over the last few years partially due to the 23% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) bump for CHIP. The fact is, ninety-nine percent of U.S. seniors are insured. Our children deserve no less.

Likewise, MIECHV has been a vital part of Illinois' home visiting system and our broader early childhood system promoting program expansion, innovation and efficiency. MIECHV supports young children and their families through evidence-based home visiting programs that improve outcomes for children, including children's health and school readiness. The latest data shows that MIECHV funds are not only providing services to nearly 1000 high-risk families annually, but are also allowing Illinois to explore innovative strategies to connect these supports to additional very high risk families, such as pregnant and parenting youth in Illinois' child welfare system and families experiencing homelessness.

We strongly urge you to ask your leadership to immediately reauthorize and fully fund both the CHIP and MIECHV programs for 5 years, as well as maintain the FMAP bump for CHIP, to ensure access to high quality continuous coverage for all children. Failing to meet children's health and developmental needs today prevents Illinois from reaping the long-term social and economic benefits associated with children's health coverage and evidence-based home visiting, including

increased educational attainment and higher future earning potential. Allowing both these programs to expire will deny families these essential services and undermine Illinois' comprehensive continuum of care.

We appreciate your long-standing bipartisan support of these programs. We urge you to honor your commitment to our state's youngest residents by investing in their well-being and passing fully funded five-year extensions for CHIP and MIECHV, without further delay.

Sincerely,