Iowa Maternal and Child Health Programs

2010 Advocacy Statement – Iowa Public Health Association

Background:
Iowa families have been served by the state and federally funded Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant since 1935 when Title V was added to the federal Social Security Act. The MCH Block Grant supports critical health care services for pregnant women, infants, and children, including children with special health care needs. The MCH Block Grant authorized is the sole federal program devoted to improving the health of all women and children including Iowa children with special health care needs. Over the past years, funding for the MCH Block Grant was reduced while cost of health services escalated. The reduced investment comes at a time when gains in reducing infant mortality have stalled, low birth weight and preterm births are increasing, and the U.S. ranks 29th internationally in infant mortality rates. Iowa ranks 14th in the nation for black infant death rates (2007 data). Racial and ethnic disparities persist across health status indicators, with the black infant mortality rate double the rate for Caucasian infants.

The MCH Block Grant addresses the growing needs of Iowa women, children, and families. As Iowa faces economic hardship, more women and children seek care and services through MCH-funded programs. Resources are needed to reduce Iowa’s infant mortality rate, provide mental and oral health care to those in need, reach more children with special health care needs, and reduce racial disparities in health care.

Iowans served by the MCH Block Grant

- 10,673 pregnant women
- 39,545 infants (< 1YO)
- 133,831 children and adolescents
- 7,345 children with special health care needs

184,049 Total Iowans Served

The MCH Block Grant improves the health of Iowa women and children by supporting effective and efficient programs. The MCH Block Grant earned the highest program rating by the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB)’s Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). OMB found that MCH Block Grant-funded programs decrease the infant mortality rate, prevent disabling conditions, increase the number of children immunized, increase access to care for uninsured children, and improve the overall health of mothers and children. Continued reduction of funds decreases Iowa’s ability to continue the success.

Policy Recommendation:
Increase state funding to the Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant in order to:

- Reduce overall infant mortality and low birth weight for all Iowa families
- Provide and enable access to comprehensive prenatal and postnatal care and improve the overall health of mothers
- Assure Iowa children have access to and use community-based preventive health care (including mental and oral health) including transportation and support services to access quality health care
- Support community-based public health programs serving women, infants, and children, including children with special health care needs.
- Insure that uninsured and underinsured children receive critical dental services through I-Smile™ dental home activities and programs for uninsured children with disabilities.

For more information, contact:
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