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child support
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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

A fax message from

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To: Richard Porter

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September is: National Alcohol and Drug Treatment Month
National Cholesterol Education Month

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CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The Administration is dedicated to ensuring that the millions of children who are morally and legally entitled to child support payments receive their fair due. Child support payments help protect children from poverty, and the well being of our children must be our first priority.

The Issue

- ☐ Only 60 percent of women potentially eligible actually have a support award. Of mothers who were due payments, only about half received the full amount awarded.
- ☐ The child support award rate for the nearly 3 million never-married mothers was only 20 percent in 1987 as compared with a 74 percent rate for divorced or separated women.
- ☐ The lack of financial contribution from an absent parent -- usually the father -- is the most significant cause of child poverty.
- ☐ In 1989, the poverty rate among children under 6 years old living in married-couple families was 12 percent, as compared with 60 percent among those with single mothers.
- ☐ About nine out of 10 children on welfare who are entitled to child support do not receive support payments.
- ☐ The total past due amount owed on child support payments totals billions of dollars.

What HHS is doing to ensure child support payments

- ☐ In addition to the economic need for support enforcement, the Department's position on child support encompasses the non-economic factors as well. HHS considers the wide-ranging and multifaceted losses a child endures when a family is torn apart or the loss from the failure of a family to form in the first place. Numerous research studies show that strong, stable, loving, nurturing two-parent families provide the best environment for child-rearing.
- ☐ The Child Support Enforcement program is a joint federal, state and local partnership that supports locating non-custodial parents, establishing paternity, and setting and enforcing support orders. HHS pays two-thirds of the costs of the program, and states pick up the other third.
- ☐ In recent years, income withholding, offset of income tax refunds, support guidelines, and closer links to credit bureaus, are just a few of the approaches states have used to increase collections.

(MORE)

Child Support Enforcement *(continued)*

- ❑ A record-high \$7 billion was collected from absent parents on behalf of their children through the Child Support Enforcement program in 1991.
- ❑ Through the Child Support Enforcement program, paternity was established for more than 393,000 children born out of wedlock in 1990 -- an increase of more than 54,000 over 1989.
- ❑ In 1993, about \$8.5 billion in child support is projected to be collected, a 61 percent gain in collections since 1989. In 1993, that amount represents a total return of \$3.78 for every dollar invested in the administration of the program. A total of more than \$45 billion has been collected since the program started in 1975.

For more information about Child Support Enforcement, call Michelle Jefferson of the Office of Child Support Enforcement at (202) 401-9373.

CHILD WELFARE AND CHILD CARE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The Department protects and promotes the safety and well being of children in out-of-home placement, or at risk for placement, through its Child Welfare Services.

The Issue

- ☐ Over the past decade, poverty rates have increased significantly for children under 6 years old.
- ☐ In 1989, the most recent year for which figures are available, nearly one of every four children under 6 lived in poverty.
- ☐ In the 1970s the number of poor children under 6 was fairly stable. After a period of dramatic growth in the early 1980s, the number has since hovered around 5 million.
- ☐ About 31 percent of all children under 6 in 1989 were minorities; however, 59 percent of poor children were minorities.
- ☐ Poverty rates for young children are highest in urban areas. The poverty rate among children under 6 living in urban areas was 30 percent, compared with 16 percent for suburban areas and 26 percent in rural areas.
- ☐ Investigations confirmed more than 1.4 million cases of child abuse and neglect in 1990. More than three children die each day in the United States from abuse and neglect.
- ☐ About 400,000 children are in foster or temporary care at any given time. Nearly three-fourths of the children in foster care are there because of their parents' conditions or actions: about 56 percent because of serious neglect or abuse, and 17 percent due to parents who were hospitalized, imprisoned, dead or in difficulty because of financial hardship.

Looking out for those who can't

- ☐ HHS has requested \$274 million in 1993 for grants to state welfare agencies to assist families and children at risk, including foster and adoptive children, as well as those victims of child abuse and neglect at risk of being removed from their homes.
- ☐ The Department funds each state's child welfare agency using a formula based on the state's child population and per capita income. All states are eligible to receive a share of the first \$141 million targeted for Child Welfare Services. Only those states that meet Federal requirements for child welfare practice, such as ensuring every foster child is placed in the least restrictive setting, are eligible to receive a share of the remaining funds.
- ☐ HHS has requested \$1.3 billion in the 1993 budget for a new Comprehensive Child Welfare Services grants. The budget request also includes a legislative proposal to

(MORE)

Child Welfare and Child Care (continued)

change the financing of state child welfare activities to allow states greater flexibility in meeting the needs of children and families in crisis.

- ☐ If approved by Congress, funding for the Comprehensive Child Welfare Services grants will increase to \$2.2 billion in 1997. The program will be the largest single source of federal funding for child protective and child welfare services for children and families at risk.
- ☐ Funding to develop and improve training programs for child welfare workers is targeted to be \$6 million in 1993, an increase of \$2 million.
- ☐ To promote the development of new approaches for child welfare, the 1993 budget request for Child Welfare Research and Demonstration projects is \$9 million, a \$2 million increase over 1992. The projects target placement prevention, re-unification, foster care and specialized foster care.
- ☐ HHS spent \$12.5 million in 1992 on the Abandoned Infants Program, which provides prevention services to families of babies at risk of abandonment and placement services for babies already abandoned.
- ☐ In 1992, the Department will spend \$825 million for the Child Care and Development block grant. The program provides grants to states to give low-income families financial assistance for child care and to establish or expand child development and before-and-after school programs.
- ☐ In the Child Care Program under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children, states help families become self-sufficient by providing the child care necessary for AFDC recipients to participate in the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills training program (JOBS). The HHS budget request is \$325 million for 1993. The 1993 budget also requests \$56 million to provide transitional care for up to 12 months for families who leave the AFDC rolls due to better employment.
- ☐ To help low-income families achieve economic and social self-sufficiency, the HHS budget requests \$44.4 million for the Comprehensive Child Development Program for 1993. The program uses a family-centered approach to child development. It offers services for children from conception until entry into school, and it helps families break the cycle of poverty.
- ☐ The At-Risk Child Care Program provides child care assistance to families and children who are at risk of going on welfare if they do not receive employment-related child care assistance. HHS has requested \$300 million for that program in 1993.

(MORE)

Child Welfare and Child Care *(continued)*

- ☐ To improve and increase activities aimed at protecting and treating at-risk children, \$421 million has been requested for 1993 -- an increase of \$8 million over the 1992 fiscal year spending level. That amount includes \$274 million to state child welfare agencies to continue assistance to families at risk, including foster and adoptive children, as well as victims of child abuse and neglect at risk of being removed from their homes.

- ☐ The Department will spend \$11 million in 1992 on the Temporary Child Care and Crisis Nurseries program to provide temporary non-medical child care services to families of children with special needs and to crisis nurseries for children who are abused and neglected or at risk of abuse and neglect.

For more information about Child Welfare and Child Care, call Susan Long at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at (202) 401-5123 or Bill McPherrin at ACF at (202) 401-1134.