

March 25, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
US House of Representatives
Washington, District of Columbia 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
Washington, District of Columbia 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi,

On behalf of the 1,185 state and local United Ways that serve all corners of our country including yours, thank you for your work to extend funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, and Community Health Centers as part of HR 2, the Medicare and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA). United Way supports the bill.

CHIP is critical to the health of children and pregnant mothers, and we applaud your actions to extend the program now while state legislatures are currently in session and before funding expires September 30 of this year. Together with Medicaid, CHIP has successfully reduced the uninsured rate for children in half while providing access to necessary pediatric care and screenings. We are particularly pleased that HR 2 preserves current law, as United Way's guiding principle for extension is to hold all children harmless in terms of coverage, eligibility, and benefits. While we are disappointed the bill does not extend CHIP for four years during a time of great transition and fluctuation within the health insurance markets and provider networks, we see HR 2 as a great step towards providing stability for CHIP children and families, as well as the states that administer this flexible and incredibly effective program.

Federal support for the MIECHV program ends Tuesday, March 31. MIECHV is critical for the health of children and their families. MIECHV supports evidence-based programs for pregnant women and families, helping at-risk parents of children from birth to kindergarten entry access resources and supports for raising children who are physically, socially and emotionally healthy and ready to learn. The health of the next generation is enriched by this program. Thank you for including an extension for MIECHV in this package.

And thank you for extending funding for Community Health Centers. Community Health Centers provide vital care to medically underserved areas and populations, as well as communities that have few primary care providers, high infant mortality and poverty rates, and high elderly populations. They are an integral piece to the nation's health care delivery system and deserve our continued, unwavering support.

United Way's vision is a country where all individuals and families achieve their human potential through education, income stability, and healthy lives. Our job is to create opportunity for everyone. We cannot be successful in our work without these important and effective federal programs. The children and families we all serve and their opportunity to lead successful, productive lives, depend on them. Please encourage your Members to vote AYE on HR 2.

Sincerely,



Steve Taylor
Senior Vice President and Counsel for Public Policy
United Way Worldwide