



National Association of Public  
Child Welfare Administrators

an affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association

May 28, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus  
Chairman, Finance Committee  
U.S. Senate  
511 Hart Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Edward Kennedy  
Chairman, HELP Committee  
U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman, Education & Labor Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2205 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman  
Chairman, Energy & Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2204 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Rangel  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2354 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member, Finance Committee  
U.S. Senate  
135 Hart Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Enzi  
Ranking Member, HELP Committee  
U.S. Senate  
379A Russell Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Howard McKeon  
Ranking Member, Education & Labor Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2184 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton  
Ranking Member, Energy & Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2109 Rayburn Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dave Camp  
U.S. House of Representatives  
341 Cannon Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators and Members of Congress:

On behalf of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) and its affiliate the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA), we are very interested in working with you as you craft legislation that supports President Obama's new home visitation initiative. Our members administer home visiting programs across the nation and can provide valuable information as you move forward.

APHSA is a nonprofit, bipartisan organization representing state and local human service professionals for over 76 years. NAPCWA, created as an affiliate in 1983, works to enhance and improve public policy

and administration of services for children, youth, and families. As the only organization solely devoted to representing administrators of state and local public child welfare agencies, NAPCWA brings an informed view of the problems today's families are facing to the forefront of child welfare policy.

Public child welfare directors strongly support the President's home visiting initiative. We encourage the congressional drafters to include proven home visiting models that include nurses, paraprofessionals and volunteers that work with low-income families through a strength-based model.

A 2007 Department of Health and Human Services study indicated that child maltreatment-related deaths have increased 15.5 percent and child protective service agencies have received 3.2 million reports of child maltreatment. Without a strong workforce and trained professional and paraprofessionals, the child abuse and neglect rates may continue to rise. To help address this issue, more home visitation models are needed in public child welfare programs. Research indicates that these are evidence-based initiative and proven to be cost effective. Moreover, they reduce the number of children entering into the child welfare system.

New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) operates a successful home visiting program that is research-based and includes a comprehensive holistic approach serving low income families. Healthy Families New York (HFNY) is dedicated to provide child abuse and prevention services to expectant parents and parents with infants aging from zero to three months. These children and families are considered to be at-risk of abuse or neglect and live in vulnerable communities with high poverty rates, infant mortality, and teen pregnancy. HFNY's home visitors provide families with support, education, and linkages to community services designed to address the following needs: 1) to prevent child abuse and neglect; 2) to enhance parenting skills and parent-child interactions; 3) to ensure optimal prenatal care and child health and development; and 4) to increase parent's self-sufficiency. Moreover, HFNY has provided these services to more than 600,000 homes and served over 20,000 families since its establishment in 1995.

HFNY is rigorously evaluated and shows positive outcomes in childbirth, child abuse and neglect, parenting practices and access to health care. This nationally acclaimed program was featured in a January 2009 issue of *The American Journal of Preventive Medicine* showing that all mothers enrolled in HFNY before their 31<sup>st</sup> week of pregnancy were half as likely to have low birth weight babies compared to mothers in an unassigned control group. Additionally, another study published in the March 2008 *Child Abuse and Neglect* issue indicates that HFNY has seen a decrease in incidences of abuse and neglect during children's first two years of life and reduced use of aggressive parenting practices particularly involving first time teen mothers. OCFS's home visitation model is proven to be successful in low-income communities. New York is one state out of many who operates these programs.

NAPCWA strongly believes that all children should have the opportunity to flourish in a safe, stable and nurturing environment. Public child welfare directors feel these experiences should begin at home. We ask that you speak with child welfare directors and seek their advice when crafting language. We urge you to actively support and expand research-based home visiting programs for states to invest in cost-effective, promising approaches for children to grow and thrive to become productive members of society.

Sincerely,

Jerry Friedman, Executive Director  
APHS

Erin Sullivan Sutton, President  
NAPCWA