



Health Care Services and Teen Pregnancy Prevention

ACTION

- Increase funding for Title V of the Social Security Act, the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, which was created to improve the health of mothers and children through federal-state partnerships.
- Increase funding for the Title X family planning program. Maintain Title X as a categorical federal program that mandates informed patient consent and protections of confidentiality for all patients, the type of services to be offered, and medical standards to be met.
- Increase funding for mental health services, including the Mental Health Services Block Grant and the Children's Mental Health program.
- Reauthorize and increase funding for the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act, which provides grants for a range of services for infants and young children, many of whom are HIV-infected or drug-afflicted. These infants are medically cleared for discharge from acute hospital settings but remain hospitalized because of a lack of appropriate out-of-home placement alternatives.
- Support the Family Opportunity Act, sponsored by Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) and Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Pete Sessions (R-TX). This bill can make a significant difference in the health and well-being of children with disabilities, including adopted children who are not Title IV-E eligible and children adopted privately or internationally.
- Increase funding for services to children affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS who are now being served by the Ryan White CARE Act.

HISTORY

Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant

The Title V block grant helps develop service systems in communities to meet the critical challenges facing maternal and child health, including significantly reducing infant mortality, providing preventive and primary care services for children and adolescents, immunizing all children, reducing adolescent pregnancy, and preventing injury and violence. Funding for Title V was \$732 million in FY 2002.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

CWLA works to ensure a full spectrum of programs and services to pregnant and parenting teens to guarantee their well-being and that of their children. To maximize their options in life, these young women must develop the necessary skills to obtain economic independence, self-sufficiency, and long-term family stability. Programs include child care, education, health care, counseling, nutrition, and parenting education. The Title X family planning program received funding of \$265 million in FY 2002.

Mental Health

Children in foster care have extensive mental health needs, as most have experienced some form of abuse or neglect or suffer from being separated from their families. More resources must be dedicated to research and services for children in out-of-home care so they can receive the mental health services they need and deserve to live healthy, productive lives. The Children's Mental Health Services program was funded at \$97 million in FY 2002.

Abandoned Infants Assistance Act

Congress will reauthorize the Abandoned Infants Assistance (AIA) Act this year. This program provides grants to public and nonprofit private organizations to develop, implement, and operate programs related to foster care and residential care for abandoned infants and young children. Projects may include preventing the abandonment of children, identifying and addressing the needs of these children, helping them reside with their birthfamilies or foster families, and recruiting and training foster families. AIA was funded at \$12 million in FY 2002—far below the authorization of \$30 million.

Family Opportunity Act

The Family Opportunity Act would permit families to purchase Medicaid on a sliding-scale basis and allow states to extend Medicaid coverage to children with potentially severe disabilities. Families of children with severe disabilities often struggle to provide their children with appropriate medical services. This legislation will be reintroduced in the 108th Congress.

Ryan White CARE Act

First enacted in 1990, the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act is the nation's largest federal investment in the care and treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS. The CARE Act supports a range of community-based services to children, youth, and families, including primary and home health care, case management, substance abuse treatment and mental health services, and nutritional services. Recognizing the need for increased services, Congress funded the Ryan White CARE program at \$1.9 billion in FY 2002.

KEY FACTS

- The U.S. teen pregnancy rate fell 19% between 1991 and 1997, from 116.5 pregnancies per 1,000 girls aged 15–19 to 94.3.¹ Although this is encouraging news, access to a full range of family planning services for teenagers is necessary.
- Every tax dollar spent for contraceptive services saves an average of \$4 that would otherwise be spent to provide medical care, welfare benefits, and other social services.² For every dollar spent to provide publicly funded contraceptive services, the government saves an average of \$3 in Medicaid costs for pregnancy-related health care and medical care for newborns.³
- An estimated 25% of all new cases of HIV infection in the United States occur in young people under age 21.⁴ Each day, 27–54 young people under age 20 are infected with HIV.⁵
- Studies show that more than 80% of children in foster care have developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems. Mental health services are repeatedly identified as the number one health care need.⁶

SOURCES

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