

May 1, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education & Related Agencies
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin,

As organizations committed to preventing and addressing child maltreatment, we urge you to provide a \$10 million increase to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control to establish a network of consortia on the medical aspects of child abuse and neglect.

Each year, almost one million American children are found to be victims of child abuse and neglect. The youngest children represent the highest proportion of victims. During 2005 alone, an estimated 1,460 children died from abuse or neglect. More than three-quarters of children who died were under the age of 4. It has also been documented that child abuse causes disabilities. A 1993 study by the Office of Child Abuse and Neglect found that 36 percent of the substantiated cases of child maltreatment, or about 300,000 children, caused disabilities in those children. Near-fatal child maltreatment leaves 18,000 children permanently disabled each year.

Our nation must do more to protect these most vulnerable members of our society. A growing body of research indicates that child abuse and neglect may have pervasive, long term physical and mental health consequences. The Adverse Childhood Experiences study, conducted by the CDC and Kaiser Permanente, has documented startling correlations between childhood trauma such as maltreatment and poor adult health status, including alcoholism, unintended pregnancy, and high prescription drug utilization rates.

Pediatricians and other health care providers are ideally positioned to identify at-risk children and families and intervene before maltreatment reaches a critical point. Unfortunately, health care providers have very limited training and resources available to help them in this effort. The *Health Child Abuse Research, Education and Services (CARES) Network* would serve as an infrastructure to establish communications, collaboration, and information-sharing among the various health care professionals that work directly or indirectly in the field of child maltreatment. The network would link medical providers such as pediatricians, family practitioners, dentists, nurses, child and adolescent psychiatrists, EMS providers, and allied health professions to share information, develop educational programs, disseminate and implement best practices, and ultimately prevent child maltreatment. The network would not duplicate aspects of other programs (such as Child Advocacy Centers) but would serve as a resource to law enforcement, the judiciary, the child protection system, and others.

We urge you to provide \$10 million to CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control to support this important initiative. For more information, please contact Cindy Pellegrini with

the American Academy of Pediatrics at 202-347-8600. We look forward to working with you to protect the health and safety of our nation's children.

Sincerely,

Ambulatory Pediatric Association
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus
American College of Surgeons
American Humane Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
American Public Health Association
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Brain Trauma Foundation
Child Neurology Society
Children's Health Fund
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Healthcare is a Legal Duty
Coalition for American Trauma Care
Easter Seals
Emergency Nurses Association
Families USA
Family Violence Prevention Fund
First Focus
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Children's Hospitals
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State EMS Officials
National Health Law Program
Prevent Child Abuse America
Shaken Baby Syndrome Council
Voices for America's Children