

For Immediate Release

April 11, 2017

Contact: Shannon Craig Straw, 202-674-5921, scstraw@westendstrategy.com

Coalition of Early Childhood Advocates Make the Case for Reauthorization of Voluntary, Evidence-Based Home Visiting Program

WASHINGTON—In a bipartisan briefing co-hosted by Sens. Charles Grassley of Iowa and Robert Menendez of New Jersey, a [coalition of nearly 50 organizations](#) highlighted the importance of reauthorizing and increasing funding for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV) before it expires in September.

The Home Visiting Coalition is calling for MIECHV to be reauthorized for five years at funding levels that eventually reach \$800 million each year. This additional support will allow more at-risk families across the country to benefit from home visiting services.

Speakers at the briefing included **Janet Horras**, state home visitation director in the Iowa Department of Public Health's Bureau of Family Health, who told the congressional staffers and supporters how MIECHV's flexible structure allows state governments to tailor the program to meet the needs of their residents, particularly those in rural communities. "In rural Iowa, where facilities are limited and long drives are common, the option to have a home visitor can be the deciding factor between a family receiving the early childhood health, parenting, education or child abuse prevention services they need, or going without," Horras said. MIECHV allows "the state not just to identify communities that need home visiting, but also evaluate how best to support those programs and communities to promote program and family success, and which proven interventions were best suited to meet their needs."

Kathy Stack, vice president of evidence-based innovation, the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, spoke about the impact and efficacy of MIECHV. "This program is the poster child for a lot of evidence-based efforts that followed. We've created a framework for all these models to play together."

Cynthia Schaffer Minkovitz, M.D., director, Women's and Children's Health Policy Center, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, discussed research about the program works to improve outcomes for children and families. "MIECHV holds grantees accountable for benchmarks areas— school readiness, reduces incidences of child abuse and domestic violence, increases family self-sufficiency and improves health outcomes for young children. Home visiting is grounded in established research that demonstrates intervening early sets one up for a healthy life course trajectory and saving of resources— public and private."

A participant in the briefing also included **Zakiyyah Jacobson** of Hackensack, N.J., who benefited from [Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters \(HIPPY\)](#), one of the voluntary, evidence-based home-visiting models supported by MIECHV. "Since I've been involved in the HIPPY program with my daughter Azariah, I have referred more than 10 friends whom have also seen the amazing educational, developmental, and social aspects of this program. Having gone through HIPPY with my godson Amari, I thought it better prepared me when it came time to teaching my own daughter, Azariah," Jacobson told briefing attendees. She then further explained the importance of the program to her family: "I found

myself and Azariah both struggling. The City of Hackensack does not provide full day pre-k for all children and HIPPY is an excellent supplement for us to be our child's first teacher. It allowed us to provide daily structure, lessons including math, writing and reading development skills."

###

The [Home Visiting Coalition](#) is a diverse group of organizations committed to the well-being of children, working to promote continued federal support of home visiting to strengthen families in communities across the country. Voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs improve the health, development, and education of young children. These programs set the stage for children and families to become self-sufficient and successful.