

March of Dimes Foundation

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The Honorable Chaka Fattah
United States House of Representatives
2301 House Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Fattah:

On behalf of more than 3 million volunteers and 1400 staff members of the March of Dimes Foundation, I am writing to commend you for introducing the “State Child Well-Being Research Act,” (H.R. 2477). As we understand the text of the bill and the background materials provided, the purpose of this proposal is to authorize funding for expansion of the National Survey of Children’s Health to make possible measurement of child well being on a state by state basis. This would be accomplished by: including additional indicators to assess child well being; expanding and increasing the federal collection of state data; and over sampling low income children and families.

In our judgment, there are a number of provisions in H.R. 2477 that hold great potential to improve state data on the health of children so that professionals and policy makers who focus on issues related to infant health can make better informed decisions about projects, programs and activities designed to improve child health. The March of Dimes applauds the inclusion of legislative language requiring an over sampling of low income children, a change that will provide critical information on insurance coverage and the impact of public programs, including Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program on infant and child health.

Additionally, as the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics develops comprehensive indicators for the National Survey of Children’s Health, the March of Dimes encourages members of the Forum to consider including indicators such as low birth weight, infant mortality, and childhood immunizations that will help assess the health of newborns.

Thank you for your visionary leadership to improve federal and state data resources and know that all of us at the March of Dimes look forward to working with you on this and other initiatives to improve the health of children.

Sincerely,



Dr. Marina L. Weiss
Senior Vice President Public Policy and Government Affairs