

April 2, 2008

The Honorable Dave Obey
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education & Related Agencies
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey,

As organizations committed to preventing and addressing child maltreatment, we urge you to provide an additional \$10 million 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.

A large and growing body of scientific evidence documents the devastating short-and long-term consequences of child maltreatment in our nation. 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, almost 1,500 children died from abuse or neglect. A recent report from Prevent Child Abuse America and the Pew Charitable Trusts estimates that, in addition to the human toll, child maltreatment costs our nation *over \$103 billion* every year.

The medical profession must be brought into full partnership in preventing, diagnosing, and treating child abuse and neglect. Pediatricians should advise parents at every well-child visit about issues that can trigger maltreatment, such as disabilities, colic and toilet training. Emergency physicians and nurses should be trained to detect potential case of maltreatment. Training should be provided to the wide range of health care providers who serve children and their families. The latest research should be disseminated wide so that innovative programs can be incorporated into practice as rapidly as possible. At present, however, no structure exists that allows the medical community to engage in any of these efforts in a coordinated, methodical fashion.

We therefore urge you to support the establishment of the Health Child Abuse Research, Education and Services (CARES) Network. Envisioned as a network of regional consortia, the Health CARES Network would provide the infrastructure to support training, dissemination of studies and materials, and innovative research on the prevention, detection and treatment of child abuse and neglect. It would also provide an avenue for medical experts to serve as a resource to law enforcement, judicial officials, social workers, other health care providers, and more.

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,

Academic Pediatric Association
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Pediatrics
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
Child Welfare League of America
The Children's Health Fund
Coalition for American Trauma Care
Easter Seals
Emergency Nurses Association
Families USA
Family Violence and Prevention Fund
First Focus
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
National Association for the Counsel of Children
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
National Association of Children's Hospitals
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