

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 8, 2006

The Honorable Rob Portman
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Portman:

We strongly support programs that empower women, children and families to live healthy, productive and economically-stable lives. We therefore write to encourage the Administration to include within its fiscal year 2008 budget request incentives for states and communities to adopt evidence-based programs that utilize trained nurses to serve the needs of first-time low income mothers and their children.

Communities within the states that we represent have implemented evidence-based nurse visitation programs through which trained nurses visit the homes of first-time low income mothers. The nurse home visit programs begin as early as possible in pregnancy and continue through the child's second year. The nurses work closely with the pregnant mothers and their family members to increase access to prenatal care, foster child health and development, and promote parental economic self-sufficiency. These programs have demonstrated consistent, quantifiable outcomes that have been verified through multiple, randomized controlled trials among diverse populations in communities across the United States. These positive outcomes include:

- 48% reduction in child abuse and neglect
- 59% reduction in child arrests
- 61% fewer arrests for the mother
- 72% fewer convictions for the mother
- 46% increase in father presence in the household
- 32% fewer subsequent pregnancies
- 31% fewer closely spaced (<6 months) subsequent pregnancies
- 50% reduction in language delays at child age 21 months
- 67% reduction in behavioral/intellectual problems at age 6

The nurse home visit programs in the states we represent meet the highest level of evidence defined within the Program Assessment Rating Tool guidelines of the Department of Health and Human Service's Administration for Children and Families

(DHHS-ACF). In fact, these programs serve as exemplary, evidence-based models for other home visit and maternal and child health programs.

We understand that DHHS-ACF has been exploring methods of encouraging states and communities to replicate evidence-based nurse home visit programs serving first-time low income mothers. We are also aware of the substantial interest among states and communities in expanding the number of these programs to better serve the thousands of first-time low income mothers who currently are not benefiting from this kind of proven prevention program. We therefore urge the Administration to provide incentives for states and communities to adopt and expand evidence-based nurse visitation programs for first-time low-income mothers in the fiscal year 2008 budget request. We are certain that creating and expanding nurse visitation programs of this type will enable women, children and families to live healthier and more productive lives.

Thank you for your attention to our interest in this matter. Should you have any questions, please contact Karen Howard in the office of Senator Ken Salazar (202/228-5435).

Sincerely,



Senator Ken Salazar



Senator Arlen Specter



Senator Mike DeWine



Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton