

March 28, 2017

The Honorable Matt Dean
Chair, House Human Services Finance

Re: House Omnibus Health and Human Services Bill

Chairman Dean, my name is Angela Thies. I am the Director of Advocacy and Government Affairs for the March of Dimes in Minnesota. I am here today to thank you for the important work of budgeting for our great state and to call specific attention to the provisions for evidence based home visiting program.

Founded in 1938, the mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of all women of childbearing age, infants and children by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality.

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As part of that mission, we support evidence-based home visiting programs, which have shown significant improvements in maternal and child health. Home visiting programs match expectant parents with trained providers who work with them to improve developmental, educational and health outcomes for young children. These programs help to ensure that mothers receive adequate prenatal care and to promote healthy behaviors such as smoking cessation and maintaining a healthy diet.

Evidence-based programs have been shown to improve the lives and futures of children by helping to reduce the risks of premature births, low birth weight infants, birth defects, and maternal and infant mortality. We would like to call attention to the need to increase funding for providing evidence based home visiting programs, with the goal being

to reach every corner of Minnesota with these valuable programs as requested in the Governor's proposal.

Highly effective family home visiting programs produce outcomes that the March of Dimes consider important investments in maternal and child health. The Nurse-Family Partnership program found that every \$1 spent on home visiting programs saves \$2.88 on average, and up to \$5.70 can be saved in high risk populations.

In the state of Minnesota, nearly 70,000 babies will be born each year – with nearly 1 in 10 of those babies being born prematurely, or before 37 weeks. Not only does it make good fiscal sense to invest in home visiting programs, we owe it to the babies born in Minnesota every year and their families to ensure they have the resources available to get a strong start.

The March of Dimes strongly supports home visiting as an investment in better outcomes for parents and their children and will continue to work with the Minnesota Department of



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Health and home visiting stakeholders to improve the birth and health outcomes of our children.

I thank you for your time and your important work throughout the budget process.

Sincerely,

Angela Thies
Director of Advocacy and Government Affairs