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Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

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Ms. Cynthia Phillips

Acting Director, Division of Home Visiting and Early Childhood Services

Maternal and Child Health Bureau

Health Resources and Services Administration

Rockville, MD 20857

June 20, 2018

Dear Ms. Phillips:

On behalf of Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), I am writing in response to the Supplemental Information Request (SIR) regarding the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program needs assessment update. HIPPY is an evidence-based home visiting model that receives funding through MIECHV. We work with parents of 2-5 year olds to prepare their children for success in school.

We appreciate your clarification that the purpose of the new needs assessment is not to destabilize current programs by shifting funds from underserved communities in which they currently operate. Unfortunately, the congressional decision to continue level funding for MIECHV will likely not create new opportunities in additional high-needs communities. However, the growing interest in evidence-based home visiting may enable other funding sources to reference the updated needs assessment when determining where to locate additional programs.

Therefore, we feel it necessary to note that the state's capacity for providing substance abuse treatment and counseling services was not referenced in the recent MIECHV reauthorization. Substance abuse is a pressing issue for a growing number of families across the country, yet it is but one of many potential risk factors facing families under stress. Inclusion of substance abuse treatment and counseling capacity as a measure of a community's needs while ignoring other capacity issues like access to medical care, housing instability, or mental health treatment, will paint a distorted picture of a community's needs. We therefore recommend the needs assessment maintain its focus on the areas outlined in the statute and not expand to include a singular capacity question in a related but separate area.

HIPPY appreciates all your work in overseeing the effective implementation of the MIECHV program. The home visiting field has grown, innovated, and adapted in the years since the law was passed, and we look forward to continued collaboration with you on behalf of children and families across the country.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Staci Croom-Raley

Executive Director