

March 7, 2025

[ADDRESS]

RE: Protecting Funding for Healthy Start – A Lifeline for Maternal and Infant Health

Dear Congressman/Senator \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing on to urge you to oppose any efforts to eliminate or reduce funding for the federal Healthy Start program. Healthy Start is a federally funded initiative under the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) that supports 115 sites across the country – including six here in the Commonwealth – all dedicated to improving maternal and infant health outcomes. These programs are making a tangible difference in the lives of families, ensuring that parents and babies receive the care and support they need for a healthy start.

The Healthy Start program was established in 1991 as a Presidential Initiative by President George H.W. Bush to invest in America's children and to improve the infant mortality crisis in the country. Since 1997, Pennsylvania's six Healthy Start sites have worked in collaboration with local nonprofits, federally qualified health centers, hospitals, universities, and, most importantly, our community members and families to improve maternal and infant health outcomes. While we have made significant progress, our work is far from finished. High rates of birth defects, preterm birth, low birth weight, maternal complications, and sudden unexpected infant death all contribute to elevated rates of infant mortality in Pennsylvania.

In 2024, Pennsylvania Healthy Start served 1,850 pregnant, postpartum, and parenting participants at six locations in Philadelphia, Delaware County, Pittsburgh, and Dauphin County. Each of these locations has infant mortality rates more than 1.5 times the national average. Healthy Start is one of the few Maternal and Child Health (MCH) programs in the nation that explicitly focuses on fathers, recognizing their critical role in maternal and infant well-being.

The loss of Healthy Start funding would be devastating. We are still actively working to improve infant morbidity rates and ensure that every baby has the best possible start in life. Without continued federal support, we risk undoing decades of progress.

I respectfully urge you and the House Committee on Appropriations to vote against any proposed funding cuts to the Healthy Start program and to safeguard this vital investment in maternal and child health. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and share more about the direct impact of Healthy Start's strong work in Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the health and well-being of families in our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Name:

Title:

Org:

Address:

City, State, Zip

Email:

Phone: