

# MCAH Action

## California Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Directors

### RE: Elimination of Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) State Funds for counties

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San Bernardino County

#### Data Work Group

Sandra Rosenblum, MSN, MPH  
Marin County

#### Administrative Information

Nikki Buckstead Payne  
NCADD 916.924.6267  
[Nbuckstead@ncaddsac.org](mailto:Nbuckstead@ncaddsac.org)

#### Advocacy Information

Charlotte Newhart  
916.492.0745  
[cmnewhart@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cmnewhart@sbcglobal.net)

#### Education & Training Information:

Cynthia Fahey, RN, PHN, MSN  
Perinatal Advisory Council  
818.708.2850  
[cfahey@paclac.org](mailto:cfahey@paclac.org)

*More babies and more women may die if MCAH funding & programs are eliminated.*

A loss of funding for MCAH services today would cause us to lose the progress we have made in improving the health of women, infants and children in California.

Through MCAH services, California leads the nation in addressing and improving preconception, maternal, and infant health as well as in addressing the unacceptable health disparities in different ethnic and other groups such as African Americans, teens, and special-needs children.

MCAH services in California are provided through 61 city and county health jurisdictions that work with healthcare providers, community-based organizations, communities, and families to improve the health of women and children.

**Statewide, the loss of \$2.1 million in State Funds for MCAH Allocations would result in the loss of another \$2.2 million in Title XIX federal match for a total loss of \$4.3 million (\$1 in SGF brings in \$1.06).** In addition, every \$1 SGF in the Black Infant Health Program brings in at least \$.78 in federal match, and every \$1 SGF in the Adolescent Family Life Program brings in at least \$.42 in federal match.

Our MCAH services improve health care and health outcomes for women, infants, and children:

- We help women get into prenatal care to prevent maternal complications, preterm births and low birth weight infants.
  - Maternal illness and death is an increasing challenge in California.
  - Babies born who weighed less than 3 pounds 4 ounces accounted for 0.9% of births but 35.7% of hospital costs (year 2000 data).
  - Babies born who weighed less than 5 pounds 8 ounces accounted for 5.9% of births but 56.6% of total hospital costs (year 2000 data).
  - Prevention of one premature baby saves an average cost of \$41,610.
- We help prevent teen pregnancy.
  - The public sector cost of teen births averaged \$4,080 per teen in 2004.
- We help pregnant women get into substance abuse treatment.
  - Children with prenatal exposure to alcohol and other drugs have a major impact on the costs of health care, education, child welfare, and juvenile justice systems down the road.
- We help prevent babies from dying.
  - From 1995 to 2006 in California, infant deaths decreased by 13.3%.
- We help reduce the number of children with disabilities.
  - California has 9.9% of estimated children with special health care needs as compared to the national average of 13.9%.

MCAH funding loss will undermine and impair the quality of medical care and services provided to pregnant women, infants, and children. Pregnancy losses, infant disabilities and deaths will rise as a direct result of loss of MCAH funding.

It is vital to the health of California that funding for MCAH not be eliminated.