

March of Dimes Foundation

Office of Government Affairs  
1401 K Street, NW Suite 900A  
Washington, DC 20005  
Telephone (202) 659-1800  
Fax (202) 296-2964

[marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org)  
[nacersano.org](http://nacersano.org)

May 25, 2015

The Honorable Timothy Ryan  
United States House of Representatives  
1424 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ryan,

The March of Dimes, a unique collaboration of scientists, clinicians, parents, members of the business community, and other volunteers representing every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, applauds your efforts to improve birth outcomes for our nation's most vulnerable children and strongly supports the *Healthy Start Reauthorization Act of 2016*.

For 25 years, the Healthy Start for Infants Program has provided services to promote healthy pregnancies and healthy infants in the nation's most challenged communities. Due in part to the success of the program, the US infant mortality rate dropped to an all-time low in 2014. The racial gap in infant mortality rates is narrowing as well. Despite that progress, however, there is still much more to be done. The United States' infant mortality rate ranks 26th in the world and significant racial disparities in birth outcomes persist; for example, non-Hispanic black infants are more likely to be born preterm and more likely to die before their first birthday than non-Hispanic white infants. Poverty also continues to have a significant impact on birth outcomes.

The United States should be a worldwide leader on maternal and infant health. In order to do so, we must invest in programs to improve birth outcomes for our most at-risk populations. The Healthy Start for Infants Program has a 25-year track record of providing culturally appropriate and effective services to communities with the highest infant mortality rates. The March of Dimes strongly supports the reauthorization the Healthy Start for Infants Program and offers our endorsement of the *Healthy Start Reauthorization Act of 2016*.

The March of Dimes appreciates your leadership on this issue, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to promote the health and well-being of all pregnant women and infants. If we may be of further assistance, please contact Rebecca Abbott at 202.659.1800 or [rabbott@marchofdimes.org](mailto:rabbott@marchofdimes.org).

Sincerely,



Dr. Jennifer L. Howse  
President

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