

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

December 5, 2022

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the organizations listed below, we write to express our support for Title IV – Public Health Response to Infants Affected by Substance Use Disorder of S. 1927, the *CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2021*, and urge you to include the bill in the end-of-year legislative package. Passage of Title IV would represent a significant step forward in ensuring that infants affected by parental substance use disorder (SUD) and their families receive needed treatment and other support services that allow them to thrive while also preventing the need for foster care. It is must-pass legislation this Congress.

S. 1927 would create a new title under CAPTA, Title IV – Public Health Response to Infants Affected by Substance Use Disorder, which substantially updates and improves current statute to encourage a family-centered treatment approach for these infants and their parents. The reforms in the bill bring the current plan of safe care provisions, which the bill renames “family care plans,” into alignment with what we know to be best practice: providing SUD treatment and other support services to families to prevent adverse experiences for children, support parents in their recovery, and prevent future involvement in the child welfare system. Title IV of S. 1927 also takes steps to separate family care plans from the child protective services system by emphasizing the importance of developing family care plans independently from CPS, allowing governors to designate a lead agency with expertise in public health, naming the state Medicaid agency as a partner in implementation, and ensuring that the use of medications to treat SUD in pregnancy does not trigger the intervention of the child welfare system without separate evidence of child abuse or neglect. We applaud the committee’s commitment to strengthening these provisions of CAPTA to ensure the law emphasizes a public health approach to infants affected by parental SUD.

Combined, these reforms will ensure that more families have access to needed treatment and other services and supports. They also have great potential for keeping more children safely with their parents and reducing the number of infants placed in foster care – goals that promote positive outcomes for both children and families, and which are consistent with recent federal reforms such as the *Family First Prevention Services Act* passed in 2018, which took historic steps to allow child welfare dollars to provide evidence-based prevention services, including SUD treatment services, to families of children at imminent risk of entering foster care.

While much more work is needed at the federal and state levels to meet the needs of infants and parents who are affected by SUDs, Title IV of S. 1927 represents a critical opportunity to improve policy and practice for these children and families. We urge you to ensure its passage this Congress.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Children and Family Futures
College on Problems of Drug Dependence