

Title V, Social Security Act:

Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Future

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Working in Partnership to Promote Healthy Women and Healthy Families

MARY WAKEFIELD: I'm not Katie. I'm not Katie, I'm Mary Wakefield and this is a surprise. Katie, with you we're going to have another speaker come in right before you. If you wouldn't mind staying up here with us for a couple more minutes? The reason why the surprise for Katie and for the rest of us is that we have our next guest who is from the White House. And is a strong advocate of Maternal and Child Health and health programs across the United States. We really want educate -- Katie to be up here on the stage why we introduce Valerie. I'm Mary Wakefield the health services administrator. Thank you, John, for those great words.

I want to say good afternoon, to all of you and thanks to each of you for being here with us today. This is really a landmark day, isn't it? I think it is a terrific opportunity to celebrate what has been not just a landmark day but a landmark year. A landmark year for both mothers' health and children's health and the health of this nation as a whole. This sort of progress that has been achieved over the course of this last year is not achievable or sustainable without solid partnerships and effective alliances. And at the Health Research and Services Administration we wouldn't be where we are today without each of you. Nor would we be where we are today without the support of the Obama administration which has put the well-being of the nation's children and mothers at the forefront of healthcare reform and shown its trust in the health services administration by giving us lead responsibility for over 50 provisions of the Affordable Care Act. In fact, the Obama administration has shown unparalleled support for the programs that we operate in partnership with all of you. Our conversations in this administration begin and end with a focus on mission to improve the health and well-being of our nation's women, children and families, a focus that is fully embraced by this administration and we are very, very grateful for that support.

With that in mind, it is then my great pleasure to introduce Valerie Jarrett, senior advisor to the President of the United States. Valerie is -- go ahead. I know where she is and I know she can hear you. Valerie is one of President Obama's closest and most trusted advisors and has a highly challenging and very impressive portfolio. In addition to serving as advisor she oversees the White House Office of intergovernmental affairs and public engagement. She is the president's liaison to the business community and she serves as the chair of a White House council on women and girls which President Obama established over a year ago to provide a coordinated federal response to the challenges confronted by women and children. I think it speaks volumes about the president's commitment to this issue that he would ask Valerie to lead that council.

In her own right Valerie Jarrett is someone with a tremendous breadth of experience in federal, private, public sectors. Before joining the administration she was president and CEO of the Habitat Company, a real estate management company in Chicago. She also served as chairman of the board of the University of Chicago Medical Center. Prior to that Valerie served for eight years in Chicago government as deputy Chief of Staff for Chicago mayor Richard Daley and commissioner of the city's Department of Development. She practiced law with two private firms before . That she's also a mother who was once called out at a meeting by the mayor of Chicago. She was called out at a meeting relatively new in her job by Mayor Daley. She was called out for constantly checking her watch during this meeting. They were discussing Chicago city business and the mayor finally seeing this happening frequently turned to her and called her out and asked her, why are you checking your watch all the time? And Valerie Jarrett responded by saying, that her daughter's Halloween parade started in 20 minutes and she was going to miss it. She needed to get there on time. Valerie Jarrett cares deeply at many levels. Not only about her own daughter who is now 25 years old who has been the subject of that anecdote but she cares deeply of all of America's children. Please help me welcome Valerie Jarrett. [Applause]

VALERIE JARRETT : Thank you, my goodness. Thank you, everyone. What a lovely welcome. Good afternoon, everybody. How are you guys doing out there? Bright lights so I can barely see you. I'll need to hear from you. Thank you, Mary, for that delightful introduction. I love it when people tell that story because it says a lot about the importance of having a boss having a work/life balance. The mayor was that kind of boss for me. Mary, your work as the administrator of health resources and service administration and our country's highest ranking nurse and a champion -- [Applause] That's right. A good shout-out because you also, of course, are a champion of expanding access to healthcare and we really appreciate that. On behalf of the president of the United States and his administration, I want to thank all of you who are here today for the incredible work that you do each and every day to help our children get a healthy start in life. How about giving yourselves a round of applause? [Applause] Because as you

know whether you are a healthcare provider or counselors or program administrator or researcher or parent, each of you make a tremendous difference. And I know the last few years have not been easy by any stretch of the imagination. And as we climb out of the deepest economic hole since the great depression, you're being asked to do more with less and trying to meet the growing needs with shrinking resources. And I'm here today because president Obama and his administration share your commitment to making sure that all mothers and all children get the care they need and the support that they deserve.

So I am especially glad to be here on the 75th anniversary of Title V. Title V as you all know is a great American success story. The longest standing public health program in our nation's history. It plays an indispensable role in helping mothers give birth to and raise healthy children. As a mom, I can't imagine any work that's more important. And as a president's liaison to the business community I'm reminded every day in this age where human capital rules supreme the healthy -- children are a key to our prosperity. The president shares this which is why over the last two years of his administration he's undertaken an ambitious agenda to improve the health of mothers and children. That started with one of the first bills the President sign, the CHIP reauthorization act. Thanks to this law we were able to sign up more than 2 1/2 million previously uninsured children of either CHIP or Medicaid just last year. And today in a time when our nation faces so many challenges, I'm proud to say that more children have health insurance now than ever before in our nation's history. [Applause] As you know, that is a tremendous accomplishment. We're not going to be satisfied as long as any parent has to choose between putting food on the table and a checkup for a child. So that's why I encourage all of you to accept the connecting kids to coverage challenge issued by Health and Human Services secretary.

There are still 5 million children eligible but not enrolled for CHIP. We don't have to write any new legislation to cover these children. We don't need to create any new programs to cover these children. We just need to find them and sign them up. So the secretary has traveled all over the country. She's challenged governors and mayors and pediatricians and faith groups and schools and community organizations and sports teams and everyone she could reach to take on this very important mission. This audience isn't new to this work. Many of you have been doing this for years, years. But today, I want to formally issue a challenge. Any time a child is without health insurance, comes to your clinic or visits your office, please find out whether they're eligible for Medicaid or CHIP. And to learn more about how you can help visit our website. It's insurekidsnow.gov and help us in this mission. Together, we can continue to move closer to the day when no American child has to go without the necessary treatment in medicine.

That's just a start. The same month President Obama signed the CHIP authorization act first lady Michele Obama called on Americans to come together to end childhood obesity in this generation. Now she could have chosen from any one of a variety of issues but she chose to focus on childhood obesity because she understands how serious the consequences are for the future of our children and our country. The fact that we've heard the statistics before shouldn't make them any less shocking. The share of children overweight has quadrupled in the last 40 years. Risk for conditions such as type II diabetes and asthma and it means they are more likely to be overweight as adults. Health consequences can be far more serious. This is an issue for so many of our families. Our kids are spending more and more time on the couch, we all know that, in front of the computer screen and less and less time what I did as a child, play outside. Eating more unhealthy snacks and bigger portions. The first lady has led a national effort to make it easier for parents and children to make healthy choices. That means making sure that our neighborhoods have stores that sell fresh fruit and vegetables and safe streets and parks where kids can go outside and play. It means giving parents the information that they need to choose the healthy options whether they're eating out or buying groceries in a supermarkets. So many parents would do the right thing if they knew what it was and making sure our children get healthier meals in schools where they spend so much of their time.

Right now Congress is considering legislation that would make significant improvements to the nutrient programs that have served so many million children across the country every day. This legislation has the strong support of the President, the first lady and this administration. It passed the Senate unanimously. We hope the house will send it to the President's desk to be signed so more children can get the nutritious foods they need to learn and grow. Combined with these historic efforts will help millions for children get a safe and healthy start in life across the country.

The biggest breakthrough for moms and children in the last two years, of course, is the Affordable Care Act. There have been millions of words printed about it and hours of cable TV devoted to it and we all know hard to break through but there is one part that I believe hasn't gotten nearly enough coverage and that is that it is probably the strongest women's health law since Medicare. As you know, -- thank you. I know it's something that resonates with this audience. Because as you know, our health insurance system hasn't always been that friendly to moms. Women are more likely to be uninsured and more likely to be underinsured. They're less likely to get insurance through their jobs and they try to buy it on their own they often have to pay a higher price, Mary was telling you about my daughter who is now 25. Today a health insurance company might charge her up to 50% more than a man her age for the same coverage. It doesn't mean that she's entitled to better benefits. Not by any margin. We know that many of the

individual plans that women buy do not cover contraceptives, which is there are more prescriptions written for that than anything else for women. 80% of them don't even cover maternity care.

What this new law does is bring fairness to the insurance market. Starting in 2014 the Affordable Care Act creates a new consumer-friendly insurance market called an exchange. This new marketplace has a few basic rules. First, you can't charge women more just because of their gender. Seems basic but a good start, don't you think? [Applause] So let's start with that. That practice will be over. Second, you can't shove people out because of a health condition. You'll be able to get insurance even if you've had breast cancer, breast cancer survivor or if you have diabetes or any other disease. [Applause] It means that domestic violence can no longer be discriminated against because it's a preexisting condition. [Applause] Third, every plan that participates in the exchange will have to cover essential health benefits like maternity care and newborn care and what this means is that every woman will have access to affordable healthcare plan that provides the care that that woman needs to raise a healthy child. It's a huge step forward in the right direction. This will all happen in 2014.

The new law also is helping families right now. As many of you see every day, we have a healthcare system that focuses on treating people when they're sick, not keeping them healthy in the first place. We're trying to change that. That's why beginning last month all new plans are required to cover recommended preventive treatments, screening and vaccinations. That includes the definitive standard of preventative care. It includes BMI screening which we all know are one of the best tools for helping parents make better decisions for children's health.

New plans will also be forbidden from denying coverage to children because of their pre-existing medical conditions. The days of children being locked out of the health insurance system are finally coming to an end. And as our children get older, they can stay on their parents' insurance until the age of 26, something my daughter did this summer. She finished school and there was a little gap as we often find now when children finish school. Until her job started she joined my insurance plan. In the months and years to come the Affordable Care Act will keep knocking down barriers to care for mothers and children. The new law makes it easier for mothers, it contains new support -- [Applause] It contains new support for disabled Americans including children to help them live at home where they can be surrounded by friend and loved ones who adore them. And it includes -- and it includes an unprecedented 1.5 billion investment in proven home visitation programs. [Applause] In these programs as I know you know from the applause trained professionals visit expectant parents getting ready for the birth of the child and be there in the child's early years to share parenting tips and help parents support their children's development. For a small initial investment these programs can help parents develop skills that benefit

their children for years to come. And I know the people who will be implementing these programs in states are all right here today.

I want you to know that we thank you for the work that you are doing to make this program such an enormous success. With supporting these efforts, we know when Maternal and Child Health improves, we all benefit. Healthy mothers tend to have healthy families. Healthy children can concentrate better on their class work and there is more -- they're much more likely to grow up into healthy adults who are productive workers and contribute to our community. When you add it all up, all these benefits, the Maternal and Child Health is one of the best investments in any country -- that any country can make and that's why we've also put these goals at the center of our international aid efforts. As we move forward with this ambitious agenda, we know it's ambitious, we know these improvements will come one community at a time. You are the ones on the front lines of our healthcare system. You are the ones developing the policies and administering the programs that make such a big difference in the lives of families, especially those with limited resources or special health needs. 75 years after the creation of Title V, we have made a great deal of progress. But we have much work left to do. The stakes are high and there is nothing more important to any of us than the well-being of our sons and daughters and there is nothing more important to our future prosperity than a healthy development of the next generation of Americans. That's why President Obama and his administration are committed to working with you every step along the way until all mothers and children can get the support they need. Thank you very much. [Applause]