

# March of Dimes

March 2003

## Advocacy Update *from the Office of Government Affairs*



### President Signs National Do-Not-Call Bill Exempts Non-Profits

On March 11, President Bush signed legislation authorizing the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to collect fees from telemarketers to operate a national “do-not-call” registry.

In mid-February both houses of Congress overwhelmingly approved the “Do-Not-Call Implementation Act,” (HR 395). The registry creates a national list of consumers who do not wish to receive telemarketing calls. Telemarketers who call the numbers on the list are subject to fines of up to \$11,000 per call. During the regulatory process pertaining to this legislation, the March of Dimes lobbied successfully to exempt from these restrictions chari-

ties and telemarketers who are calling on behalf of non-profit organizations. Instead of being subject to the FTC rule, telemarketers working with non-profit organizations are required to maintain their own list of individuals who do not wish to be called. In addition, charities and their commercial telemarketers are now required to identify themselves and state the purpose of their solicitation when they call potential volunteers or donors.

According to the FTC national

“do-not-call” registry implementation schedule, consumers may begin registering in July of this year. In September, telemarketers

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and other sellers will have access to the registry and in October, the FTC and States will begin to enforce the provisions of the the national reg-

istry.

More information about the registry can be found at the FTC web site [www.ftc.gov/donotcall](http://www.ftc.gov/donotcall).



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## Controversial Provision Dropped from CARE Act

A major step in moving the “Charity Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment Act” (CARE Act) to a full Senate vote came last week when principal sponsor Senator Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) announced that he would modify the bill by removing a controversial section pertaining to the faith-based language. Agreement to set aside these provisions improves the likelihood that the bill will be taken up by the full Senate and that the March of Dimes supported tax incentives to encourage charitable giving will be approved.

The CARE Act includes several tax provisions designed to

stimulate charitable giving and volunteerism. If enacted, these provisions would allow:

- Taxpayers who file the short form to deduct a portion of their charitable contribution. Specifically, the provision would permit individuals to deduct up to \$250 of a \$500 gift, and couples could claim up to \$500 of a \$1000 donation.
- Donors to make contributions from their IRA’s without having to pay in-

come tax on their gift.

If a time agreement can be reached by the Republican and Democratic Senate leaders, full Senate consideration of the CARE Act could come as early as the first week in April.

Don’t forget, you can read Advocacy Update online at the March of Dimes web site [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com)

## Dr. Howse Speaks at Research!America Forum

On March 18, Dr. Jennifer L. Howse, president of the March of Dimes, participated in a national forum sponsored by Research!America, an organization whose mission is to increase public support for bio-medical research. The forum, entitled “Leaders in Research and Technology Face the Nation: Aiming for Quantum Leaps in Medical and Health Research,” was moderated by Juan Williams, senior correspondent for National Public Radio’s *Morning Edition*.

In addition to Dr. Howse, fo-

rum participants included federal research agency leaders—Dr. Elias Zerhouni, Director, National Institutes of Health; Dr. Mark



Dr. Howse directing question to federal research agency leaders panel—Dr. Fleming, Dr. Clancy, Dr. McClellan, and Dr. Zerhouni.

McClellan, Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration; Dr. Carolyn Clancy, Director, Agency

for Healthcare Research and Quality; and Dr. David Fleming, Deputy Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Forum also featured research company representatives Dr. Carol Kovac, General Manager, Life Science Solutions, IBM; Dr. Raymond Ruddan, Corporate Vice President, Science and Technology, Johnson and Johnson; and, Evan Jones, President and CEO, Digene Corporation.

Dr. Howse along with Dr. Floyd Bloom, Board Chairman, American Association for the

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## New Medicaid Resource Available

The federal-state Medicaid program is a major source of financing for health care services provided to pregnant women, infants and children. In 2000, Medicaid covered the cost of more than one-third of hospital births (1.4 million) and paid for health services provided to some 22 million children. Of particular interest to the March of Dimes, the program is a major funding source for health services needed by preterm babies and children born with birth defects.

To assist the public and policymakers in understanding the

structure and operation of the Medicaid program, the Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured has recently released an updated version of *The Medicaid Resource Book*. This reference tool includes information on enrollment, health services covered, as well as program funding and administration. Specifically, the Resource Book provides information on:

- Eligibility for pregnant women, infants, children and others

- Mandatory and optional benefits
- Federal and state financing
- State waiver options
- Program administration, including outreach and enrollment

The Resource Book is available online at <http://www.kff.org/content/2003/2236> or a hardcopy can be ordered by calling (800) 656-4533 and requesting publication # 2236.

## SC Expands Newborn Screening Panel

One year ago the South Carolina Chapter successfully secured a seat on the state Newborn Metabolic Screening Committee for March of Dimes volunteer Robert Newell, M.D. This first step was part of a larger Chapter strategy for expanding the South Carolina newborn screening program.

Dr. Newell, a neonatologist and long time March of Dimes volunteer, spent the next twelve months working with Chapter and Health Department laboratory staff to promote the addition of screens for Maple Syrup Urine Disease, Homocystinuria, and Biotinidase to the State screening panel.

In January, the Board of Directors for the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control approved expansion of the State's screening panel to include all ten core tests recommended by the March of Dimes.

The South Carolina Chapter is now working with the Health Department to create an educational brochure for distribution to interested parents. The expansion will be implemented within the next 10-16 months.

### March of Dimes 108<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress Handbook

A limited number of Handbooks will be sent to Chapters in April. The Handbook, produced especially for the March of Dimes, contains: biographical data on each elected official; key staff contacts; addresses telephone numbers; and photos of the U.S. Representatives and Senators. In addition, the Handbook lists the membership of all House and Senate Committees and Subcommittees and provides a glossary of legislative terms. Since this guide was prepared exclusively for the Foundation, it includes information about the March of Dimes advocacy agenda and public policy priorities for 2003.

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Advancement of Science; Dr. Jane Delgado, President and CEO, The National Alliance for Hispanic Health; Dr. Reed Tuckson, Sr. Vice President, Consumer Health and Medical Care Advancement, UnitedHealth

Group; and, Deborah Wince-Smith, President, Council on Competitiveness questioned the government and private sector representatives and participated in

the ensuing discussion on a variety of issues including the optimal bal-



Dr. Howse addressing both the federal research agency leaders and the research company representatives.

ance between research and clinical care, the importance of clinical trials, and strategies for communicating research findings to the public.

The *Advocacy Update* delivers legislative news about March of Dimes issues on a monthly basis.

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