



## Grassley, Menendez To Introduce Bill Renewing Home Visit Program

August 10, 2017

Sens. Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ) plan to introduce a bill to renew the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program after the August recess, a Grassley spokesperson said, and they're gathering signatures on a letter in support of MIECHV reauthorization, but it's not clear how long the senators plan to reauthorize the program, how much money they want to give the program or how they'll pay for it.

MIECHV is a home-visit program. Providers help pregnant women and new moms care for their babies with such services as breast-feeding instructions and positive-parenting techniques. It's one of the many so-called extenders that providers hope catch a ride with legislation to renew funding of the Children's Health Insurance Program. Most of the extenders involve Medicare policies, but the Health Services and Resources Administration runs MIECHV.

**Home visit providers asked for \$400 million over a five-year reauthorization. House Republicans gave them both in H.R. 2824, but the bill offsets that funding with a measure that makes providers uncomfortable, said Licy DoCanto, of the DoCanto Group, who lobbies for home-visit providers.** The offset blocks Social Security benefits to people with outstanding arrest warrants for felonies or outstanding arrest warrants for violating parole. **That offset doesn't affect home-visit providers or beneficiaries, but House Democrats oppose the change to Social Security, and the providers want a less controversial offset, DoCanto said.**

**"It's fair to say that home-visit advocates are concerned about the payfor in the House Ways and Means bill,"** he said.

That leaves much of the decision making to the Senate, where Grassley and Menendez are taking the lead on MIECHV reauthorization. However, it's not clear whether the Senate will agree to the level and duration of funding providers want or, if the Senate decides to pay for it, how it will do so.

**The decision that providers must make in lobbying for MIECHV reauthorization is a common one and is likely similar to choices facing providers lobbying for other extenders, DoCanto said.**

**"It's not unusual in advocacy to be offered all of what you are seeking in legislation but then don't like the way in which it's proposed to be paid for,"** he said. **"That is something advocates for MIECHV and extenders in general face."** — *John Wilkerson*