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**Reply to****Department of Federal Affairs**

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February 8, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 US Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221 US Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leaders McConnell and Reid:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a non-profit professional organization of 64,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I write regarding Congressional efforts to respond to the tragedy in Flint, Michigan and the exposure of its citizens to lead, a potent neurotoxin, through their drinking water.

The AAP supports federal efforts to provide immediate funding and other assistance to the people of Flint, including the amendment offered by Senators Stabenow and Peters. While their proposal is a vitally important first step, we would urge the Senate to provide additional funding for long-term educational, early literacy, nutrition, medical, behavioral, and other assistance to this community. This includes, but should not be limited to: support for Head Start and Early Head Start; quality child care; literacy programs; Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program enrollment; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; school meals and afterschool feeding programs; and mental health screening and treatment.

There is no safe level of lead exposure for children. Lead damage can be permanent and irreversible. Lasting decreases in cognition have been documented in children with blood levels as low as 5 micrograms per deciliter of lead in blood.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore clear that the children and families of Flint will need comprehensive assistance in both the short- and long-term.

The AAP is eager to assist this community, and federal policymakers, in both immediate and longer-term solutions to this public health tragedy. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ami Gadhia in our Washington, D.C. office at 202/347-8600 or [agadhia@aap.org](mailto:agadhia@aap.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benard P. Dreyer".

Benard P. Dreyer, MD, FAAP  
President

BPD/ag

CC. Sen. Lisa Murkowski  
Sen. Maria Cantwell  
Sen. Jim Inhofe  
Sen. Barbara Boxer  
Sen. Debbie Stabenow  
Sen. Gary Peters

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/lead-exposure/Pages/Lead-Exposure-in-Children.aspx>.