

GREAT NEWS! Bipartisan House and Senate Bills Have Been Introduced to Extend F2F Funding

On May 17, Representatives [Mikie \(Michelle\) Sherrill](#) (D-NJ) and [Fred Upton](#) (R-MI) introduced the *Family-to-Family Reauthorization Act of 2019* ([H.R. 2822](#)). The bipartisan bill would extend funding for the grant program that funds Family-to-Family Health Information Centers (F2Fs) for an additional five years, through federal FY 2024, at the current funding level of \$6 million per year. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Energy & Commerce, which has jurisdiction over the F2F program and many other health programs.

On May 23, Senators [Chuck Grassley](#) (R-IA) and [Robert Menendez](#) (D-NJ) introduced the *Supporting Family-to-Family Health Information Centers Act* ([S.1647](#)). Like the House bill, this bill would extend funding for the F2F grant program through federal FY 2024 at the current funding level. The Finance Committee has jurisdiction over the F2F program in the Senate. Senator Grassley chairs that committee, and Senator Menendez is a long-time committee member. The legislation is needed for continuation of the F2F program beyond the end of the current federal fiscal year (FY 2019).

Family Voices will be encouraging other Members of the House and Senate to cosponsor these bills.

See the [Family Voices website](#) for congressional press releases about the bills and other information.

BACKGROUND:

[Family-to-Family Health Information Centers](#) are family-led centers providing support to families of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) and helping them navigate the health care system so their children can get the care they need. The federal F2F grant program was created on a bipartisan basis in 2006. Since 2009, when the program was fully phased in, there has been one F2F in each state and the District of Columbia. Thanks to a 2018 amendment to the program, now there are also F2Fs in American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, plus three F2Fs dedicated to serving American Indian and Alaska Native families.

Each F2F is staffed by highly-skilled, knowledgeable family members who have first-hand experience and understand the challenges faced by families of CYSHCN. These uniquely qualified staff provide critical support to families caring for CYSHCN, particularly families of children with complex needs and those from diverse communities. F2Fs also assist providers, state and federal agencies, legislators, and other stakeholders to better understand the needs of, and serve, CYSHCN and their families.

The F2F grant program was funded at \$5 million annually from 2009-2017. In 2018 and 2019, funding was expanded to \$6 million to provide for the eight new F2Fs to serving families in territories and tribal communities. More information on CYSHCN and F2Fs can be found in the [2018 F2F Data brief](#).

Through a cooperative agreement with the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Family Voices provides technical assistance and training for the F2Fs, and produces materials for families and health care professionals to promote family-centered care.