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Office of the President

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Federal Opportunities to Advance Child Health Transformation

Working Statement of the National Advisory Team, November 3, 2020

COVID-19 has been disruptive to children and their families and the health systems that serve them, particularly primary care. The triple crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic downturn, and reckoning on race have elevated attention to racial inequities and social injustice in both the health care system and our country as a whole.

Because of COVID-19, the public and the policy community now have heightened recognition of the value of frontline providers in child health and other fields. Providers reached out, supported, and engaged children and their families, offering two- and multi-generation approaches to protect child health and development. At the same time, health practitioners faced new challenges in providing that care, not recognized in the current financing systems. It is clear that the child health care system will not simply revert back to the way it was before COVID-19. We must work to build back better, smarter, and fairer. The future of our children and society depends upon it.

Far too many U.S. children, through the poverty, isolation, stress, discrimination, or marginalization of their families and communities, do not have access to or receive what they need to succeed. The result is profound disparities in opportunity based upon socioeconomic status, zip code, and color of their skin. Currently, none of the systems serving children—health care, behavioral health, economic assistance, early care and education, and family support—is sufficiently resourced to fulfill its own role, but each has evidence-based models and best practice protocols to do so. The federal government has a critical leadership opportunity in these systems, in partnership with states and communities, to equip the child health field to move toward a new and better standard.

- x Enhanced federal financial participation under Medicaid for care coordination/ case management for children which address social as well as medical determinants of health, including