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Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting News

As yet another year comes to a close, we here at the Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) thought the best way to celebrate 2017 would be to focus more than usual on the incredible feats some of our home visiting programs have accomplished. The largest part of this newsletter highlights stories from the field that we don't often get to hear. Please read on in "Unsung Chronicles of Home Visiting," to hear about the amazing work being done in Maryland home visiting programs. We felt that it was important to share the compassion and dedication our home visitors have for this difficult but rewarding work. From the first sentence, the importance put on healthy families is obvious! We hope you enjoy these stories as much as we did.

May 2018 bring us reauthorization, new opportunities for workforce development, and continued opportunities to engage and support Maryland families. Here's to a great start to a new year!

Unsung Chronicles of Home Visiting

Family Success Story

Contributed by LaShawn Moore, Supervisor, Healthy Families Baltimore County



Te'kia enrolled in our program prenatally in 2014. Te'kia was already parenting a daughter at that time. One of Te'kia's biggest challenges was allowing others to support her while she was parenting her children and working on improving her family's financial self-sufficiency. Te'kia did not view these challenges as areas of growth, but as "a part of life," and attributed them partly to who she is as a person. Te'kia's Family Support Worker acknowledged her stage of change and went on to introduce her to reflective strategies. Through the use of Problem Talk, Explore & Wonder and accentuating her positive strengths, Te'kia moved through the stages of change. Once in the "action" stage of change, she began to communicate better with her mother, her older daughter, and her partner.

Malachi will turn four years old in 2018! Te'kia has been bonded and attached to him since he she was pregnant with him. The entire family works together to ensure that Malachi meets developmental milestones and provides him opportunities to shine. At the age of three, Malachi can tell a great story as if he is reading from a book! Te'kia is always excited to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire as she enjoys watching Malachi grow and learn. She also enjoys seeing how big his afro can grow!

During recent goal planning for the next six months, Te'kia was able to reflect on her accomplishments during her partnership with Healthy Families Baltimore County. One statement she made was, "I am now able to see that it is okay to ask for help." Over the past two years, Te'kia and her partner, Malachi's dad, have completed the Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training and have obtained the certification. They have started on a career path with the CDL certification and are financially stable. Te'kia is now parenting three children well! Te'kia shares that she will stay in the Healthy Families Baltimore County program until Malachi is 5 years old. She values not only the support she gets with child development but she loves the time that she gets to reflect on the direction she is taking in life.

Parents as Teachers Home Visitation Makes A Difference For a Family This Year!

Contributed by Robin Hoff, Carroll County Judy Center PAT Home Visitor,
& Susan Mitchell MSW, CCPS, Judy Center and PAT Coordinator

Let me share the story of Kim*, a young mom with 2 children who lives in Carroll County. The Preschool Special Education teacher at Robert Moton Elementary in Westminster, MD referred Kim and her children to the Judy Center. Her son has an Individual Education Plan and struggles with sleep and behavioral issues. The family grapples with domestic violence and financial difficulties, causing Mom to feel overwhelmed. She was uncertain how to help her son and deal with the mounting issues at home.

A few months after we began Parents As Teachers (PAT) home visits, the family became homeless -- living in a hotel and most recently the Women and Children's Shelter.

Despite her many obstacles, Kim never missed a home visit and is engaged during each visit. We discussed suggestions for better sleep, reading with the children, handling temper tantrums, and other parenting tools. As the visits progressed, exploration of resources for the family occurred and referrals were provided. Kim began attending Come Learn with Me learning playgroups with her younger daughter, while her son attended the Preschool Special Education Program (PREP). Kim connected to some of the offered resources in the community such as Parent Child Interaction Therapy and Potomac Case Management, and is working with a therapist for her own mental health.

Kim shared that she was very worried about moving because she did not want to lose the services of the Judy Center or her home visitor. She developed a relationship with her home visitor and feels supported as she continues to engage with needed resources. Kim shared, "sometimes I feel like you (home visitor) are the only one who cares."

Although the obstacles continue to be great, Kim has continued to work closely with the Judy Center and her home visitor in the best interest of her children. As we move to the end of this year, she is days away from moving into her own apartment with the children and continues to maintain her PAT visits and attends Come Learn with Me on a regular basis.

*Name has been changed.



Graduation Successes in Washington County

Contributed by Dawn Orndoff, BS, MHA
Program Manager, Healthy Families of Washington County



In June 2017, the Washington County Healthy Families program was proud to celebrate the graduation of seven families, all of whom dedicated themselves to participating in the program for five full years. The Washington County Healthy Families Program celebrated these graduating families' successes by inviting all of the participants in the program to attend a "Celebration of Success" group and graduation ceremony for the graduating families held at Western Maryland Hospital.

Families of the Washington County Healthy Families program were greeted by all members of the program's staff. At the event, families enjoyed a light luncheon along with developmentally friendly activities for their children. Each participant in the program also received an educational gift for their child which included books, puzzles, puppets, board games and Kindergarten readiness backpacks for all of the graduates.



Program Spotlight

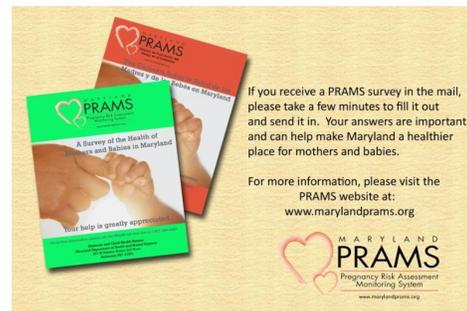
The Maryland Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)

The goal of the Maryland Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) Project is to reduce infant morbidity and mortality and to promote maternal health by influencing maternal and child health programs, policies, and maternal behaviors during pregnancy and early infancy. The information from PRAMS may lead to improvement in the health of mothers and infants in Maryland.

Maryland PRAMS is a mixed-mode surveillance system supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), and the Vital Statistics Administration (VSA). Each month, a random sample of approximately 200 new mothers who delivered a live birth in Maryland is selected from the birth certificate records when the babies are between 2-4 months of age. The survey asks questions about the mothers' experiences and behaviors before, during and shortly after pregnancy and is available in both English and Spanish. Mothers who do not respond to the PRAMS surveys sent via mail have the option to complete it over the phone. Participation in the survey is completely **voluntary** and all answers are kept **confidential** to the extent allowed by law with a unique ID number.

The CDC requires a set response rate threshold is achieved in order to publish PRAMS data externally. Locating and contacting the mothers to request their participation can sometimes prove challenging. What can you do to help promote PRAMS as a home visitor or healthcare provider? If your client receives a PRAMS survey, please encourage her to fill it out and send it back in the enclosed reply envelope sent with the survey. The postage is already paid. In an effort to increase response rates, women who complete the survey by mail or phone are automatically entered into a monthly drawing for a chance to win a \$100 Target gift card!

For more information about PRAMS, please [visit our website](#). On this site, you will also find annual data reports as well as topic specific focus briefs. Here is what the survey looks like:



Sustainability Success

Maryland Medicaid Announces Community Health Pilot Selections

On December 19, 2017, the Maryland Department of Health announced award selections for the Home Visiting Services and Assistance in Community Integration Pilot programs. Both pilots are part of the Maryland Medicaid §1115 HealthChoice Waiver. First round funding will be distributed to entities in Harford, Cecil and Montgomery Counties, and Baltimore City. These four programs are now eligible to receive Federal matching Medicaid funds to expand their current services. This is the first time Medicaid matching funds have been available for Home Visiting Services and Assistance in Community Integration programs. Read the press release [here](#).

The Harford County Health Department has been selected for the Home Visiting Services Pilot program. The program is designed to improve maternal and child health outcomes by facilitating regularly scheduled home visits, connecting families with resources, and promoting positive parenting approaches. Through the pilot, the Harford County Health Department will be able to expand evidence-based home visiting services through the Healthy Families America model to the benefit of high-risk pregnant women and children up to two years of age. The program is currently being funded through other non-Medicaid funding sources. Up to 30 families will be eligible to participate during the first year.

Maryland Medicaid's second-round Home Visiting Services (HVS) Pilot funding opportunity began in earnest with the release of a request for Letters of Intent on December 4, 2017, with a due date of December 22, 2017. Letters of Intent are **optional** and not required prior to applying for Pilot funding. Maryland Medicaid will release a HVS Pilot Request for Applications-Round 2 on **January 22, 2018**. Interested entities should visit the HVS Pilot website or email mdh.healthchoicerenewal@maryland.gov for more information.

Promising Practice

Belly Buddies

Contributed by Lashelle Stewart, MBA
Interim Executive Director, Baltimore Healthy Start, Inc.



Belly Buddies is a group for prenatal women trademarked by [Baltimore Healthy Start Inc.](#) that seeks to decrease stress and increase resilience and support among the mothers participating. The groups are eight-week sessions that meet two times per week. The components include: Yoga, Child Birth Education, Nutrition, Parenting, Knitting, and Breastfeeding education among others. The group culminates with a Birth Blessing Away Ceremony. This ceremony creates a sacred and safe environment where mother-to-be can explore the challenges and joys that lie before her as she approaches birthing and mothering.

Belly Buddies was first piloted by Healthy Start in 2007 as a prenatal education service for either first-time mothers or mothers who had experienced a previous poor pregnancy outcome. It proved to be very popular, and several participants praised it for pulling them out of the isolation that accompanied their pregnancies.

A [recent Baltimore Sun article](#) highlighted the program and interviewed one of its participants, who stated that the group "taught her how to make bean burgers in place of greasy fast food, imparted the benefits of breast milk and offered frequent reminders about safe sleeping for babies - Alone, on their Backs and in their Cribs." For more information about Belly Buddies and Baltimore Healthy Start, contact: [Lashelle Stewart](#).

CQI Corner

Contributed by Maelondy Holman, Ed.D. Continuous Quality Improvement Consultant,
Maryland Department of Health

On October 26, 2017, the Continuous Quality Improvement Consultant, Dr. Maelondy Holman, spearheaded a Career and Resource Fair for The Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV). The focus of this event was to promote Home Visiting as a career, to get fathers engaged with their children and families, and to recruit more male home visitors with hope of getting fathers to participate in home visits with mothers.



Resume Assistance

The event served as a multiple purpose initiative. Individuals were able to participate in workshops related to home visiting, receive resume services, and network with others who work with children and families.

During the event, motivational speakers included Dr. Leon Caldwell, Dr. Errol Bolden, and Dr. Willie Rockward. Dr. Caldwell focused on

the topic "Building Healthy and Stronger Families throughout Our Communities," Dr. Bolden discussed "[Home Visiting and Families Being Trauma Enlightened](#)," and Dr. Rockward presented on "[Family Insights and Guidance: Faith-Based Home Visiting and Skills Recognition](#)." In addition a session was conducted regarding "[Dress for Success](#)" led by Crystal Dickerson and Dr. Bolden.



Dr. Maelondy Holman and Presenters

We were seeking individuals who are passionate about developing families emotionally, mentally, physically, and financially for the betterment of healthy relationships within homes. For questions regarding career assistance in the home visiting field, [contact Dr. Holman by email](#).

Dynamic Data

A Year in Data

Contributed by Jarvis Patterson-Askew, MS,
Data and Fiscal Program Administrator, Maryland MIECHV Program
Maryland Department of Health

As the Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program approaches the midway point of another fiscal year, all sites will have the opportunity to review FY17's data in a new way. Data review snapshots are being compiled to convey how sites fit into the Maryland MIECHV data outlook and how each compares to the other 16 sites across the state. Each of the Health Resources and Services Administration's 19 constructs will be shared with sites and how they fit into the minimum, maximum and state results for the year. Brief comments and feedback will also be shared. Please look for this to hit program managers' emails in the coming

Resources and Updates

Help UMBC Name the MIECHV UMBC Home Visitor App!

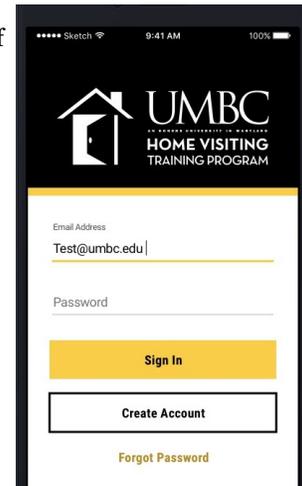
The University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Home Visiting Training Program is developing an interactive app to help home visitors practice and develop their skills. We are running a contest to find a short, interesting, and catchy name for our upcoming mobile application. If your app title is chosen, **you will win a \$50 giftcard!**

Submissions should be:

- Short (ideally 11 characters or less)
- Related to Home Visiting, UMBC, MD, and/or Training
- Catchy, clever, and easy to remember
- One to two words (can include an acronym such as "MIECHV")
- Unique (no other apps with the same name)

Here are some app names for inspiration: Duolingo, CandyCrush, WhatsApp, Lyft, NextBus

Please email all ideas to miechv@umbc.edu. Deadline: **January 26th, 2018.**



FREE Smoking Cessation Resource: Maryland Tobacco Quitline

The Maryland Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT NOW) is a free, evidence-based counseling service funded by the Maryland Department of Health. Tobacco users 13 years and older are eligible for services and those 18 years and older can choose among phone- and/or web-based services, receive text message support, and may qualify for a free supply of nicotine patches and/or gum, while supplies last.

Marylanders can call 1-800-784-8669 to talk to a live Quit Coach 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Counseling is provided in English, Spanish or other languages. Anything discussed with a Quit Coach is kept confidential.

The Maryland Tobacco Quitline offers enhanced services for pregnant women. Pregnant and post-partum women receive a series of 10 calls (compared to the normal four) with a dedicated team of specially trained Quit Coaches to address benefits of quitting for both the mother and the child, and the effects of secondhand smoke and relapse after the baby is born. In order to participate in the incentive program, pregnant and post-partum women can call the Quitline and register for services. No referral is required. Pregnant women can receive up to \$90 in gift cards just for completing series of calls while pregnant and after the baby is born. The gift cards are for Target and Babies'R'Us, two retailers that do not sell tobacco products.

Health providers and health professionals can order FREE Maryland Tobacco Quitline materials by visiting www.SmokingStopsHere.com. Free training is available for introducing healthcare providers to tools and resources geared to help them address tobacco cessation treatment and referrals for their patients. Upon completion, participants may be eligible to receive Continuing Medical Education credits approved by the American Academy of Family Physicians. The training can be accessed at www.helppatientsquitmd.org. Marylanders can access [local resources](#) for community contact and smoking cessation support program information for additional support.

Upcoming Events and Trainings

UMBC Home Visiting Training Certificate Program Training Announcement

The UMBC Maternal, Infant & Early Childhood Home Visiting Training Certificate Program is offering another round of training session in **spring 2018**.

The series of trainings focus on how to talk effectively to families about challenging issues such as mental health, substance use, domestic violence, and behavior management and how to effectively supervise home visitors on these issues.

Space is limited!

Training is free of cost, and we provide the training materials. If your site would like to participate in this training series, please contact us at miechv@umbc.edu. Please note that registration occurs on a first-come, first-served basis.

To learn more about our training program, [visit our website](#).

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Get in Touch

The newsletter team wants to hear from you! Please contact us with questions, comments, and suggestions for content. We can be reached by [email](#) or phone: (410) 767-7066. For more information on home visiting in Maryland, [visit our website](#). Not subscribed yet? [Sign up here](#).

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