

Home Visiting in Maryland

News from the Old Line State

Volume 1 Issue 2

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Newsletter Archive

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Purpose of This Newsletter

This newsletter is a platform for information sharing among home visiting programs in Maryland. It will provide updates, resources, and general information at both the state and jurisdictional levels. Its intent is to increase awareness of important issues and improve communication between home visiting programs and stakeholders.

In This Issue:

[Legislative Corner](#)

[MIECHV News](#)

[Provider Perspectives](#)

[Program Spotlight](#)

[Promising Practice](#)

[Sustainability](#)

[Successes](#)

Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting News

There's a lot going on in the world of Maryland MIECHV!

Here are some highlights:



The [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) has recently updated both its reporting requirements and its annual performance measures -- better known as the benchmarks. Starting in April 2016, quarterly performance reporting began replacing the former monthly reporting requirements for MIECHV sites. Starting in October 2016, sites will begin reporting on the new measures. [Find more information here.](#)

In February, the MIECHV team hosted the first Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) technical assistance webinar. All grantees are now required to develop and implement formal CQI plans, and beginning July 1, 2016, will be required to conduct one statewide CQI project per fiscal year and quarterly Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles. We will be hosting mandatory quarterly webinars to provide sites with the information needed to conduct successful processes that result in improved outcomes. The next webinar will be held on **June 16 at 1:30 pm**. The first webinar was recorded and [may be accessed here.](#)

Happy News: Maryland has been awarded the FY17 MIECHV Formula Grant, which ensures continued funding of our home visiting programs through September of 2018!

Sad News: the MD team has lost all three key members over the past few months. Although we are sad for our losses, we know we've done our job well since all three staff have moved on to where they want to be.

- Erin Wagner (Program Coordinator) has gone back for her clinical training in social work.
- Jenn Bistrack (Policy Analyst) is able to bike to her new

[Hot Topics for Home Visitors](#)

[Dynamic Data](#)

[Resources and Updates](#)

[Upcoming Events and Trainings](#)

Legislative Corner

Sine Die

Contributed by Colleen Wilburn, MPA, Chair, MD Home Visiting Alliance

[The Maryland General Assembly](#) adjourned for the year at 11:59 pm on April 11, 2016. This year's session was relatively uneventful with regards to bills that directly affect home visiting within the state, except for the Governor's Budget. The home visiting budget for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), which supports several programs, was level funded for the 17th year.

Although not a direct cut in program budgets, funding at 1999 levels places programs in a difficult position with rising costs in personnel, travel, and training. Therefore it is vitally important that programs [educate their local representatives](#) on the support they provide to families with young children in their communities. [Read more...](#)

position, conducting home visits to assist patients in correctly following medical advice!

- Matt Snead (Data and Fiscal Coordinator) has accepted a position with the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis!

We will miss them and wish them the best of luck! In the meantime, please contact [Mary LaCasse](#), [Dona Ponn](#), or [Maggie Porter](#) with any MIECHV-related questions as we work diligently to rebuild a new team.

Provider Perspectives

Judy Center Partnership of Queen Anne's County Expands Services to Include Home Visits

Contributed by Elizabeth Miller, Program Coordinator, The Judy Center Partnership of Queen Anne's County

The [Judy Center Partnership of QAC](#) is funded by the Maryland State Department of Education, community donations, and other grants obtained each year. We work with many partners in the county to achieve our primary goal of identifying and helping parents prepare their children for school success. Parents are their children's first and most important teacher, and we are there to support them in this role.

During the 2015-2016 school year, with the support of the Maryland State Department of Education and Queen Anne's County public school system, the Judy Center Partnership expanded its services to include: 1) Sudlersville Elementary School (SES) Home-work Help Home Visits, and 2) Judy Center Home Visits for children (birth - 5) residing in the SES catchment area.

Angie Soto, a recent graduate of Wilmington University, was hired by the Judy Center Partnership to provide these services to the community as the Judy Center Bilingual In-Home Interventionist ("Judy Center Home Visitor"). Our home visiting model uses the [Frog Street Toddler Bilingual program](#) -- a comprehensive, research-based curriculum. Frog Street recognizes that early literacy plays a key role in enabling the kind of early learning experiences that research shows are linked with academic achievement, reduced grade retention, higher graduation rates and enhanced productivity in adult life (Strickland, Riley-Ayers, 2006). The program features include but are not limited to the following: 1) the use of early brain development research as the framework for instruction, 2) robust daily routines that develop key social and emotional skills, 3) planned instruction with child-directed play, and 4) valued individual differences. [Read more...](#)

Program Spotlight

Coming Together as a Team to Tackle a Program Challenge

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) works!!!



Washington County Healthy Families Team

"Why do we have 37 positive screens, and out of those 37 screens only two families enrolled into the program?" This was the ongoing question for the Washington County Healthy Families Program.

Our team used Continuous Quality Improvement to look at this concern and developed a process map to determine how the program receives a referral and how long it takes for that family to enroll. After completing the process map, we realized that referrals were received

and made to multiple workers, indicating that there were several different processes for how families were enrolled into the program. In addition, it would take several months for a case to be assigned to a Family Support Worker after an assessment had been conducted. Often, by the time families were contacted, they were no longer interested in the program or had enrolled into another service in the community.

The Washington County Healthy Families Program restructured this process, and now, within 24 hours, the family is contacted by the **Quality Assurance Specialist**. By having one person be the primary contact and scheduler, the process from referral to enrollment decreased from several months to approximately two weeks. [Read more...](#)

Promising Practice

Building H.O.P.E. in Baltimore City

Contributed by Min Kim, Program Coordinator, Interconception Home Visiting,
Family League of Baltimore

The [H.O.P.E. \(Healing Ourselves through Peer Empowerment\) Project](#) is an innovative, peer-led interconception care program, designed to reduce risk for subsequent poor birth outcomes in women of reproductive age in Baltimore City who have experienced a fetal or infant death. It was initiated by B'more for Healthy Babies (a citywide initiative to reduce infant mortality) in partnership with Roberta's House, an urban family grief-and-loss center. B'more for Healthy Babies adapted the evidence-based Healthy Families America home visiting model and the research-based Partners for a Healthy Baby curriculum from Florida State University to address specific needs around grief support, reproductive life planning, and linkage to a medical home. The program offers home visiting services and group-based interventions.

H.O.P.E. Project leadership and staff know firsthand how difficult it is to lose a child. Project Director Tamira Dunn recalls that "when you have a healthy baby, people visit you and shower you with gifts, but when a baby dies, no one comes to visit you. I just want to give women the support I needed but didn't get." More personal stories and program information may be found on the [H.O.P.E. Project brochure](#).



Tamira Dunn

If you, a family member, or friend is or has gone through this type of loss, consider referring her to this resource [by email](#) or phone: 410-235-6633.

Sustainability Successes

Promoting and Enhancing Breastfeeding Support in Baltimore County

Contributed by Tomeaka Jupiter, LCSW-C, Director,
Healthy Families Baltimore County, Abilities Network

In January of 2015, [Abilities Network's Healthy Families Baltimore County](#) (HFBC) program was awarded a grant from the [National Association of City and County Health Officials](#) (NACCHO). This grant created an opportunity for the program to work collaboratively with the Baltimore County Local Management Board, MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, the Baltimore County Department of Health, WIC, and the Baltimore County Library to promote and enhance breastfeeding support for families residing in a high-need area of the county. Grant funding supported the development and implementation of a weekly breastfeeding group luncheon that is facilitated by an [International Board Certified Lactation Consultant](#). This group meets at the local library and provides opportunities for mothers to come together to receive professional support and education about breastfeeding, to engage in developmentally appropriate story times, and to build their social support network. The group is also a resource for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers who are involved with local community service agencies.



Grant funding has also provided the opportunity to enhance in-home breastfeeding support for families that are engaged in home visiting services in the county. The Public Health Nurse who works with the HFBC program was trained as a Certified Lactation Counselor. As a result, eligible families are able to receive in-home support to address breastfeeding challenges. Through collaborative efforts, the county's WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator developed breastfeeding support training specifically for home visitors. [Read more...](#)

Hot Topics for Home Visitors

Working with Undocumented Families

Contributed by George Escobar, Senior Director, Human Services, CASA

Home visitors working with undocumented families have additional challenges in supporting family stability. At the March 17 Home Visiting Conference held by the [Maryland Family Network](#), George Escobar with [We Are CASA](#) addressed how home visitors can help families understand their legal rights. A number of helpful resources, in both English and Spanish, [may be found here](#). You may also reach out to Mr. Escobar with any follow up questions [by email](#) or phone: (240) 491-5725.

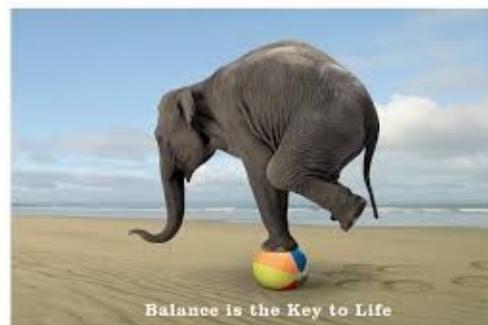
Home Visitor Self Care

Contributed by Dona Ponn, M.S., Ed, Program Coordinator, MIECHV

Anyone who works with high-needs families is like a bucket that can get filled with traumatic stress.

Don't let your bucket run over! There are ways that home visitors can find a balance between work and life, and here are a few helpful tips:

- Keep the caseload reasonable.
- Maintain balance between work and home: turn off cell phones after work, limit work hours when possible, take vacations and take lunch breaks.
- Practice stress reduction breathing: breathe in to the count of four, hold for two counts, breathe out to



the count of eight.

Most importantly, remember: Balance is the Key to Life!

Dynamic Data

Screening Tools for Sensitive Issues: Data from the Maryland Home Visiting Evaluation

Contributed by the Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland Evaluation Team

The Maryland Home Visiting Evaluation Team recently completed its first phase of activities -- thank you to all participating programs! We surveyed home visiting sites across the state to learn how programs communicate with families about sensitive issues. [Results showed](#) that 88 percent of programs have a formal tool to screen clients for mental health, 70 percent for maternal substance use, and 68 percent for domestic violence. For mental health, most programs use the [Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale](#). For maternal substance use and domestic violence, sites mainly use a state, agency, or program-designed tool.

Evaluation results suggested that not all programs currently have effective, comprehensive screening tools. Statewide recommendations for evidence-based screening tools may help improve home visitor communication in mental health, substance use, and domestic violence. Find the full research brief here: [Volume 1: Communication about Mental Health, Maternal Substance Use, and Domestic Violence](#).

Again, thanks to all sites that participated in the survey and we look forward to working with you on upcoming activities to advance home visiting in Maryland! For more information, contact [Laina Gagliardi](#).

Resources and Updates

New Requirements for Lead Screening of Children in Maryland

Contributed by Rachel Hess-Mutinda, MSW, LGSW
Environmental Health Bureau, DHMH

Effective March 28, 2016, healthcare providers are required to test all children born on or after **January 1, 2015** for lead exposure at their 12- and 24-month visits. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) has issued new regulations formalizing this testing requirement. Children born before January 1, 2015 should be tested as they have been previously.



Lead is a metal that can be toxic when swallowed or inhaled into the body, and many children in Maryland suffer from lead poisoning. Children are most vulnerable from the womb to age 6, but all can be affected by lead toxins. Lead is a home health hazard that can harm a child's brain, causing lifelong learning, behavior, and growth problems. The symptoms of lead poisoning are not always easy to detect, but its effects are long-lasting. Find more information on lead poisoning and [how Maryland is working to prevent it](#). [Read more...](#)

Update on Training Certificate

Contributed by the UMBC Training Certificate Team

Maryland's 45 Hour Training Certificate Course for home visitors and supervisors was first piloted in the fall of 2015 and is now being piloted again in the spring of 2016. Feedback from participants in the pilots will be used to refine the Certificate Course over the summer. In the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, a randomized control trial (evaluation) will be conducted on the course, to assess its impact on

home visitors' communication skills and competencies to address challenging topics and situations.

This is an exciting opportunity for local programs to help Maryland understand what home visitors and supervisors learn from the Certificate Course and to advance home visiting nationally through our innovative approach to workforce development. Programs that agree to be part of the study will be randomly assigned to either participate in training in the fall of 2016 or to a comparison group that will take the course in the spring of 2017 or later. Once the trial is complete, the course will be opened up to all home visiting programs. More information about the evaluation is forthcoming! For any immediate questions, contact [Laina Gagliardi](#) or [Mary LaCasse](#).

New Evaluation Activities Coming Your Way Soon!

Contributed by the Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland Evaluation Team

Evaluation is a key part of Maryland Home Visiting. Last year, program managers across the state provided information on how local sites recruit families and how they carry out screening for parenting risks. Their input has been invaluable for planning how best to support programs in these two key aspects of home visiting.

Now, the Maryland Home Visiting Evaluation Team is focusing on how local programs define the home visitor's role and how they support home visitors in fulfilling that role, especially as pertains to communication with families. Beginning in May, we will be surveying program managers, supervisors, and home visitors, and using innovative methods to measure how services are delivered and why this might vary across families and local sites. The [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) sees this phase of the evaluation as ground-breaking, and has invited Maryland to present its methods at the upcoming national MIECHV State, Territory, and Tribal Home Visiting All Grantees Meeting in June.

The evaluation team looks forward to talking with sites individually about details of the study in the next few months. In the meantime, we are also interested in getting local programs' perspectives as we design our methods. Some local sites have already stepped forward to give us feedback. If your site would like to do so, we would love to hear from you and **can reimburse you for your time and effort!** For more information, please contact Laina Gagliardi [by email](#) or phone: 443-287-5128.

Upcoming Events and Trainings

June 6th-10th: HFA Integrated Strategies for Home Visiting Core Training

Adelphi, MD

Registration Contact: Phyllis Jones, 410-350-9275

Required by HFA for all HFA affiliated and accredited program staff that facilitate home visits.

Supervisors and Program Managers are also required to attend. The training outlines the specific duties of the home visitor in their role within Healthy Families America.

June 16th: CQI Technical Assistance Webinar, 1:30 pm

(Rescheduled from May 17)

Mandatory for all sites receiving funding through MIECHV. More information, including how to register, is forthcoming. Contact [Dona Ponn](#) with any questions.

June 21: Mitigating Toxic Stress and Trauma in Early Childhood, 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Regional Conference sponsored by the Maryland Maternal and Child Health Bureau
Middleton Hall, 4045 Renner Road Waldorf, Maryland 20602

This conference will educate attendees about the importance of mitigating toxic stress and trauma in

infancy and early childhood. It is intended to be a resource for all early childhood professionals including home visitors, school personnel, Pediatricians, child care providers, Social workers and therapists.

Registration will open June 1. For more information, please contact [Maelondy Holman](#).

October 3rd-7th: HFA Integrated Strategies for Home Visiting Core Training

Frederick, MD

Registration Contact: Phyllis Jones, 410-350-9275

Required by HFA for all HFA affiliated and accredited program staff that facilitate home visits.

Supervisors and Program Managers are also required to attend. The training outlines the specific duties of the home visitor in their role within Healthy Families America.

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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