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Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting News

First of all: **GREAT NEWS.** The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, currently set to expire in September 2017, has officially been reauthorized by Congress at \$400 million a year nationally for the next five years. If passed, HR 2824: [Increasing Opportunity through Evidence-Based Home Visiting Act](#) will ensure that families across the country continue to receive the vital services supported by this federal program. Find out more about the bill [here](#).



In other news, it has been a busy winter for us here in Maryland! We just submitted the latest application for Formula Funding from the Human Resources and Services Administration to continue the important work of providing essential services to at-risk mothers and children in the state. Additionally, as discussed in our [February issue](#), we are working on a joint effort with [New Jersey home visiting](#) to increase family engagement and

workforce development. We'll be sure to keep you in the loop as this collective work progresses.

Our state team is also pleased to announce two new emphases for the coming fiscal year: safe sleep and substance-exposed newborns. We are partnering with the Baltimore City Health Department and [B'More Healthy for Babies](#) to provide a day-long training for home visitors to ensure consistent messaging of safe sleep practices across Local Implementing Agencies. Regarding substance-exposed newborns, we have contracted with the University of Maryland, Baltimore County to develop a two-day training for home visitors, which we will pilot at our 2nd-annual statewide conference in September 2017. The development of this training is in direct response to the opioid crisis plaguing Maryland and the increase in the number of substance-exposed newborns identified by the Department of Human Resources. Mothers and infants with substance-related mental health and health care needs are entering home visiting programs that are not fully trained to address their presenting issues. The training will provide home visitors and supervisors with tactile tools to work with these vulnerable families.

Finally, mark your calendars for the next Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Conference. It will take place **September 19, 2017 through September 21, 2017** at the Wisp Resort in McHenry, Maryland. The three-day conference will offer daily keynote speakers as well as multiple breakout sessions and group building activities. Attendance is required for sites funded through our federal grant, and others will be welcome if space allows. More information to come this summer.

Unsung Chronicles of Home Visiting

Recognizing and Addressing Mental Health Concerns

Contributed by Kim Carter, Family Support Worker, Sinai Healthy Families America Program

I have the privilege of working with an 18-year-old mom whose 12-month-old has been deemed medically fragile due to having seizures at three months old. The mom became very overwhelmed and depressed because of the great responsibility of having to keep up with her baby's doctors, specialist, and therapist appointments as well as her own high school requirements.

The mom began to fall behind in school and was told by her school counselor that she would not be able to graduate as part of the class of 2017 due to several missing assignments. After talking with mom and hearing her cry for help, I referred her to a perinatal depression therapist. I went to medical appointments with her to assist with a care plan for her baby. I also met with mom's guidance counselor to devise a plan on how to help mom graduate this year.

I am proud to report that both baby and my mom are doing well medically, mentally, and emotionally. Mom meets with her child's doctor during scheduled appointments and with her therapist twice a month. She is also doing well in high school and graduated with the class of 2017 on June 7, 2017.

A Mother's Success Story

Contributed by Ursula Thomas, Family Support Worker, Sinai Healthy Families America Program

A mother enrolled in the Sinai Home Visiting Program in September 2013 following the birth of her son in August. Unfortunately, he was two months premature and had to stay in the hospital during a crucial bonding and attachment period.

In the beginning stages of her son's life, she lived with her father in a two-bedroom apartment. Her son's father was in and out of his life and wasn't allowed to watch her son. Her parents helped watch her son while she worked as a meal preparer in the Baltimore City School System, but did not participate in any activities outside of the home.

Today, through the resources she was able to utilize, including the Baltimore City Head Start program, her son has no developmental delays. The son's father is currently active in his life and mom has made some positive changes as well. She now has her own apartment and a great support system of friends that she meets with at least once a month. She will be completing her online training for Medical Office Billing & Coding in September 2017 and graduating from the home visiting program on June 23, 2017.

Provider Perspective

HIPPY Fairfax: Closing the Preschool Gap at Home

Contributed by Barbara Scherr, Education Specialist
Maryland State Department of Education

The *Washington Monthly* has written an [in-depth article](#) on our neighbors in Fairfax, Virginia, who are successfully using the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program to help prepare the children they serve for preschool. As those familiar with the model know, the program focuses on bridging the widening gap between children who have access to preschool and those who don't by utilizing home visitors to implement a curriculum with parents and children that focuses specifically on skills acquired in a preschool setting.

As child care costs rise and federally-funded programs receive decreasing support, it is essential that families have services like these to ensure that their children are ready to learn by the time they reach kindergarten. Additionally, the program's intensive focus on parent integration helps them truly be their children's first teacher. The full article [can be found here](#).

Program Spotlight



Luciana's Day: A Unique Way of Sending Health Messages

Contributed by Miriam Dobson, Supervisor, Special Delivery
Perinatal Nurse Case Management and
Home Visiting Program, Frederick County, MD

[Luciana's Day](#) is a video story that uses fictionalized characters to tell a story with a public health message. This story highlights the importance of entering into prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy. This creative approach to public health messaging is an offshoot of a public health method called photo stories.

Photo stories are an effective, proven way to communicate a health message to an audience. A photo story relies primarily on pictures to drive the message. Text is also included, but is secondary to the pictures. The goal of the video story process is to engage the audience emotionally.

The Problem

The idea of creating Luciana's Day stemmed from a data review conducted by the Local Health Improvement Plan Health Disparities coalition. The coalition determined that in 2013, Hispanic women in Frederick County were behind their counterparts in entering prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy. When prenatal care is accessed early, problems can be identified sooner and monitored more closely, if not remediated altogether. A Fetal and Infant Mortality Review sub-committee then formed to explore potential reasons why Hispanic women were not entering into early prenatal care and suggested solutions to the problem. One of the solutions was education. The Maternal Child Health Program then decided that a bilingual, culturally relevant, story-focused video would help engage the County's Hispanic women.

Three versions of the video were created: an English Language production for YouTube and the local County Access channel, an English version with Spanish subtitles, and a Spanish version with English subtitles.

Reception

The Luciana's Day video story was well received when viewed by both public health staff and by a group of Hispanic women at an outreach event. The plans are to distribute the video to locations where Hispanic women frequent, such as doctor's offices and cultural enrichment organizations in the community.



[Please enjoy watching Luciana's Day here.](#)

For more information on the video process, contact: [Jan Sparks](#).

Sustainability Success

University of Maryland, Baltimore County Home Visitor Training Certificate Program



Recent Training Cert. Graduates from: Dru Mondawmin HFA, Montgomery County HFA, Baltimore City Health Department NFP, and Carroll County EHS.

The UMBC Home Visitor Training and Certificate program focuses on developing both supervisor and home visitor skills to facilitate sustained use of knowledge and skills. Three supervisors who have completed the program were willing to share their thoughts about the benefits and sustainability of the training:

"I felt that at the training I got a more accurate assessment of [my staff's] knowledge and skills from practicing supervision during role-plays than I do on a ride-along. During our monthly staff... meetings, where home visitors bring to the team one of their more challenging families, one of the staff always brings up the UMBC training, which has been an excellent way of assuring that the knowledge gained is sustained." - Valerie Jackson-Brownlow, Supervisor, Healthy Families Lower Shores

"The UMBC training provides the necessary techniques to be able to really 'meet the families where they are at' as well as developing a more acute sense of compassion...I'm really glad my team and I took this training. I can definitely see the improvement in their skill set, their confidence, [their] knowledge and their sensitivity to understand, rather [than] feeling frustrated, to build trust and confidence, to listen, to explore and to reflect." - Carlos Merchán, Program Manager, Mary's Center

"Having a program like this arms our home visitors with strategies that impact our hard-to-service clients on a deeper, more profound level. [The training emphasizes how to] allow the client to reflect on what they think their problems are and if change needs to happen, all while allowing us to know what stage of change a client may be in. I believe whole-heartedly that there is a great need for this program and cannot wait for the refresher courses to be available." - Felicia McKoy-Laguerre,

We welcome questions about the Certificate Program. For more information, please contact us [by email](#) or phone: 410-455-6774. We look forward to working with more sites across the state in the coming years!

Promising Practice

Public Awareness Campaign for Lead Poisoning Prevention & Treatment

Contributed by Rachel Hess-Mutinda, MSW, LGSW
Environmental Health Bureau, Prevention and Health Promotion Administration,
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and [The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative](#) have released two new videos on best practices for lead poisoning prevention and treatment. The videos are each targeted to specific audiences: one video [provides information and resources to parents of young children](#), while the other focuses on [providers and health professionals](#) in Maryland.

The videos feature parents, providers, and community partners from around the state in an effort to raise awareness of the updated lead screening and testing guidelines in Maryland. The department strengthened these guidelines in March 2016 to gather additional data on the changing profile of lead poisoning in the state.

[Watch the Public Service Announcement for parents.](#)

[Watch the Public Service Announcement for providers.](#)

And please feel free to share this important information with your networks.

CQI Corner

Contributed by Maelondy Holman, Ed.D.
Continuous Quality Improvement Consultant, Maryland Maternal, Infant, & Early Childhood Home Visiting Program,
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

The Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Team continues to work toward improving all 18 evidence-based programs across the state through Continuous Quality Improvement. To date, 74 individuals have successfully completed [Ohio State University's online Continuous Quality Improvement training modules](#), which we require of all site team members. Congratulations to all home visiting sites for efforts toward ongoing quality improvements to their programs!

This past spring, we offered all sites an opportunity to participate in a beginner's Lean Six Sigma Training, which took place on May 12 and 18. Lean Six Sigma is a two-staged approach to quality improvement that helps drive efficiency. "Lean" refers to maximizing client value, minimizing waste in processes, creating enhanced client satisfaction, and ensuring fewer wasted resources. The trainings were held in Baltimore and Wicomico Counties.

Our team is currently in the process of planning a home visiting-oriented Career Fair with workshops geared toward recent college graduates, to take place in the fall. The goal is to provide an opportunity for individuals to attend workshops, network, and speak to leaders in home visiting for potential internship or employment. Stay tuned for more information.

We are almost at the end of the state fiscal year, which marks the first full year that our sites have been actively incorporating Continuous Quality Improvement into their daily practices. Throughout the year, site teams have worked on improving referral to enrollment processes and retention of families, among other topics. We are very proud of how much they have progressed and look forward to further quality improvements ahead!

Dynamic Data

MaxWell is coming...

Contributed by Jarvis Patterson-Askew, MS
Data and Fiscal Program Administrator, Maryland Maternal, Infant, & Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, Maryland
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

As some of you know, Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting has been anticipating the release of its brand new data system for some time now. Well -- the time is finally upon us for the roll out of all things MaxWell. Be on the lookout in coming weeks for invitations to technical assistance sessions, webinars, and group discussions about the onboarding process and transition from sites' current Management Information Systems to the newly-designed MaxWell.

It is the desire of program administrators and our data vendor - Family League of Baltimore - to provide as much

individual instruction and direct communication as possible through this process. We are excited about the operational and data collection benefits MaxWell will bring to our everyday procedures and hope you all will enjoy the product designed specifically for you and with your input.

MaxWell's enhanced capabilities will include, but are not limited to, family-specific curriculum reminders, paperless form completion, caseload calendar and notes, and data entry consolidation. Additional information will be made available in the coming months.



Policy Tidbits

Home Visiting Services Funding Opportunity

Contributed by Alexandra Loizias, MSW, MPH
Health Policy Analyst
Planning Administration, Office of Health Care Financing
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

As part of Maryland's HealthChoice Section 1115 Waiver Renewal, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is offering local governments the opportunity to request matching federal Medicaid funds for Evidence-Based Home Visiting Services for high-risk pregnant women and children up to age two. Allowable home visiting service models include Nurse Family Partnership and Healthy Families America. Up to \$2.7 million in matching federal funds are available annually, and, when combined with the local non-federal share, pilot expenditures may total up to \$5.4 million annually.

Each pilot program is required to be managed by a lead local governmental entity such as a local health department or management board that has the ability to fund 50 percent of total pilot costs with local dollars, provide leadership, and coordinate with key community partners to implement the pilot.

Additional information about the pilot, including the Request for Applications, [can be found here](#). Applications will be accepted **until 5 p.m. ET on July 21, 2017**. An informational webinar with guidance for how to apply will be held on Wednesday, June 21, from 1:30-3pm. [Register for the webinar here](#). Any questions or comments related to the Home Visiting Services Pilot can be sent to dhhm.healthchoicerenewal@maryland.gov.

Resources and Updates



Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! is a federal effort to encourage healthy child development, universal developmental and behavioral screening for children, and support for the families and providers who care for them. The [Birth to 5 website](#) features a list of developmental screening tools that can be used across a range of settings. There are also resources and tools on developmental screening for families, home visitors, child care providers and educators, and health care providers.

Families in Focus: A Pregnant and Postpartum Women Program Newsletter

The [Addiction Technology Transfer Center of Excellence on Behavioral Health for Pregnant and Postpartum Women and Their Families](#) has launched Families In Focus, an e-newsletter for programs focused on pregnant and postpartum women. This publication contains updates on the center's work, including new resources, training offerings, opportunities to connect with other similar programs, and more. [Visit the website](#) to learn more, and [sign up for their newsletter here](#).

SpotOn: FREE App to Help You Track Your Menstrual Cycle

Planned Parenthood has introduced [an app](#) to help you keep track of your menstrual cycle and monitor your birth control, no matter what method. You can set up reminders, record mood changes, and generally get a better understanding of what to expect from your cycle each month. Though currently only available for iPhone, an Android version is in the works. [Download the app here](#).

Upcoming Events and Trainings

Wednesday, June 21, 1:30-3pm: Webinar: Home Visiting Services Pilot Application and FAQs

This webinar will walk applicants through the HVS Pilot Application and FAQs released on June 7, 2017 (see "Policy Tidbits" section above for more information). Please review both the application package and FAQs document prior to the webinar. There will be a Q&A session at the end. [Find more information here.](#)

Tuesday, September 19-Thursday, September 21: Second Annual Maryland Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Conference, McHenry, MD

This conference is mandatory for all MIECHV-funded sites. Look out for registration information soon!

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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