

## Affordable Care Act (ACA) Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

On March 23, 2010, the President signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (Affordable Care Act) (P.L. 111-148), historic and transformative legislation designed to make quality, affordable health care available to all Americans, reduce costs, improve health care quality, enhance disease prevention, and strengthen the health care workforce. Through a provision authorizing the creation of the Affordable Care Act Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, the Act responds to the diverse needs of children and families in communities at risk and provides an unprecedented opportunity for collaboration and partnership at the Federal, State, and community levels to improve health and development outcomes for at risk children through evidence-based home visiting programs.

This program is designed: (1) to strengthen and improve the programs and activities carried out under Title V; (2) to improve coordination of services for at-risk communities; and (3) to identify and provide comprehensive services to improve outcomes for families who reside in at-risk communities. At-risk communities were identified through the statewide needs assessment submitted by each State. The program enables eligible entities to utilize what is known about effective home visiting services to provide evidence-based programs to promote: improvements in maternal and prenatal health, infant health, and child health and development; increased school readiness; reductions in the incidence of child maltreatment; improved parenting related to child development outcomes; improved family socio-economic status; greater coordination of referrals to community resources and supports; and reductions in crime and domestic violence.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the agencies partnering to implement the program, believe that home visiting should be viewed as one of several service strategies embedded in a comprehensive, high-quality early childhood system that promotes maternal, infant, and early childhood health, safety, and development, as well as strong parent-child relationships. Together, we envision high-quality, evidence-based home visiting programs as part of an early childhood system for promoting health and well-being for pregnant women, children through age 8 and their families. This system would include a range of other programs such as child care, Head Start, pre-kindergarten, special education, and the early elementary grades.

Recognizing that the goal of an effective, comprehensive early childhood system that supports the lifelong health and well-being of children, parents, and caregivers is broader than the scope of any one agency, HRSA and ACF are working in close collaboration with each other and with other Federal agencies and look forward to partnering with States and other stakeholders to foster high-quality, well-coordinated home visiting programs for families in at-risk communities. HRSA and ACF realize that coordination of services with other agencies has been an essential characteristic of State and local programs for many years and will continue to encourage, support, and promote the continuation of these collaborative activities, as close collaboration at all levels will be essential to effective, comprehensive home visiting and early childhood systems.

HRSA and ACF believe further that this law provides an unprecedented opportunity for Federal, State, and local agencies, through their collaborative efforts, to effect changes that will improve

the health and well-being of vulnerable populations by addressing child development within the framework of life course development and a socio-ecological perspective. Life course development points to broad social, economic, and environmental factors as contributors to poor and favorable health and development outcomes for children, as well as to persistent inequalities in the health and well-being of children and families. The socio-ecological framework emphasizes that children develop within families, families exist within a community, and the community is surrounded by the larger society. These systems interact with and influence each other to either decrease or increase risk factors or protective factors that affect a range of health and social outcomes.

Steps in completing the FY 2010 Affordable Care Act Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program application process:

1. The first step was submission of an application for funding; the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) HRSA-10-275 was issued on June 10, 2010, and State applications were due July 9, 2010. These applications were to include plans for completing the statewide needs assessment and initial State plans for developing the program in order to meet the criteria identified in the legislation.
2. The second step was submission of the required statewide needs assessment by September 20, 2010 as a condition for receiving FY 2011 Title V Block Grant allotments. All States submitted needs assessments that were approved and all have received their FY 2011 Title V Block Grant funds.
3. The third step will be the submission of an Updated State Plan for a State Home Visiting Program. Guidance will be provided for making the State's final designation of the targeted at risk community or communities, updating and providing a more detailed needs and resources assessment for the targeted community or communities, and submitting a specific plan for home visiting services tailored to address those identified needs. The guidance will identify criteria for establishing evidence of effectiveness of home visiting models and list home visiting models known to meet those criteria.

A separate Funding Opportunity Announcement for funding available to Indian Tribes, consortia of Indian Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations was released on June 24, 2010, and the award of 13 grants, totaling \$3 million, under this program was announced on September 29, 2010. A list of FY 2010 Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting grantees, along with grantee abstracts, is available at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/initiatives/hvvp/hvvp\\_grantees.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/initiatives/hvvp/hvvp_grantees.htm).