HOME VISITING:
A LEGISLATIVE PRIMER

EARLY LEARNING FELLOWS
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DENVER, CO
What is Home Visiting?

- Prevention strategy used to support pregnant moms and new parents.
  - promote infant and child health,
  - foster educational development and school readiness, and
  - prevent child abuse and neglect.

- Participation is voluntary.

- The focus if often on "high risk" families.
  - First-time mothers
  - Low Income/Low Education
  - Single mothers
Why are legislators thinking about home visiting?

- Importance of the first three years...and of intervening early
- Home visiting is already going on in every state
- Strong return on investment
- Questions about the most effective approaches and coordination between programs
- Federal home visiting funding gives state lawmakers an opportunity to fund new home visiting services and strengthen existing programs:
  - Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
  - $1.5 billion over five years (FY2010 - FY2014)
Brain Development and Home Visiting

- Early experiences shape the actual architecture of the developing brain.
- The first three years are a critical time with the greatest development of neural connections.
- Home visiting promotes key child and adult outcomes:
  - School readiness
  - Academic achievement
  - Juvenile justice and crime
  - Employment

Synapse – Where Two Neurons Communicate in One Direction
Adverse Early Childhood Experiences (ACE)

- Many chronic diseases in adults are associated with adverse experiences in childhood.
Return on Investment

- Effects of quality home visiting:
  - cut the number of low-birth-weight babies by 50 percent
  - reduce the rate of child abuse and neglect by nearly one-half
  - increase reading and math test scores in grades 1-3 by 25 percent
  - increase children’s high school graduation rates by 60 percent

- Cost-benefit studies demonstrate returns on investment from $1.75 to $5.70 for every dollar spent:
  - child welfare
  - K-12 special education and grade retention
  - criminal justice expenses
What Makes Home Visiting Effective? Keeping the Research in Mind

The most effective home visiting programs:

- High Intensity
- Target families to appropriate services
- Trained home visitors/high quality supervision
- Consistent implementation of the program as intended
Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)

Legislative Purpose

- To strengthen and improve the programs and activities carried out under Title V
- To improve coordination of services in at-risk communities
- To identify and provide comprehensive home visiting services to improve outcomes for families in at-risk communities
MIECHV Application Process

- Needs assessments (September 2010)
- Updated State Plans (June 2011)
- FY 2011 Formula Applications (July 2011)
- FY 2012 Formula Awards (September 2012 and annually)
- Competitive Awards (July 2011-2015)
Legislative Requirements

• Develop statewide needs assessment
• Priority for serving high risk populations
• Improvement in benchmark areas
• Implementation of evidence-based home visiting models and ensuring model fidelity
• 75% of fund to be used towards evidence-based models; 25% for promising practices
• Annual reports
Legislatively Mandated Benchmarks

- Improved maternal and newborn health;
- Reduced incidence of child maltreatment, child injuries and ER visits;
- Increased school readiness and achievement;
- Reduced domestic violence or crime;
- Improved family economic self-sufficiency;
- Improved coordination and referrals for other community resources and supports.
Evidence-based Models

- Early Head Start-Home-based Option
- Healthy Families America
- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
- Nurse Family Partnership
- Parents as Teachers
- SafeCare Augmented
National Evaluation
(part of the federal legislation)

• Mother and Infant Home Visiting Program Evaluation (MIHOPE)
  • Research findings presented to Congress January 2015
  • Early indication that MIECHV is being implemented in ways that support the intended goals. For the full report go to:

Key Considerations for State Legislators

• What outcomes are you trying to achieve?

• Are you funding programs that demonstrate high-quality services and measurable results?

• Are your home visiting investments sustainable?
  • Future changes in federal funding
  • Focus investments on programs that produce clear improvement in outcomes
Legislative Language Examples

- **Tennessee**: It is the intention of the general assembly that the program:
  - Be designed with the main emphasis of the program aimed at reducing the infant mortality and low birth weight rates in the state.

- **Minnesota**: The commissioner shall establish measure to determining the impact of family home visiting programs funded under this section on the following areas:
  - Appropriate utilization of preventive healthcare;
  - Rates of substantiated child abuse and neglect;
  - Rates of children who are screened and who pass early childhood screening;
  - Program retention rates; etc.

- **Michigan**: Requires the Departments of Community Health, Human Services and Education to collaborate and ensure that funds are used to fund programs meeting evidence-based or promising practice standards and program models using home visiting as voluntary, primary method of service delivery.
Resources

- [www.ncsl.org/home-visiting](http://www.ncsl.org/home-visiting)
- [mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/homevisiting/](http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/homevisiting/)
Questions?

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