



getting off to a HealthyStart

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MALE INVOLVEMENT AND FATHERHOOD CORNER

The Male Involvement Initiative: Where Dads Matter (MI Cohort) continues to be an integral part of the invaluable work of Healthy Start. Keeping the importance of dads and fathers front and center continues to be the work of MI Cohort. It must go on.

A viable and practical example of the work was demonstrated at the March 2010 NHSA Spring Conference that featured an informative and lively luncheon plenary titled *It Takes Two to Tango: Defining the Role of the Expectant Father*. Excellent content was discussed in town hall style with presentations from: Dr. Willie Parker, Medical Director, Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC, Inc.; Mr. Roland Warren, President, National Fatherhood Initiative; and Dr. Jermane Bond, Research Associate, Joint Center for Economic and Political Studies. The luncheon provided a great opportunity for open dialogue not only from the featured guests but from the luncheon attendees as well.

Additionally, the latest update of the work of the MI Cohort was provided to each conference attendee via postcards and place cards during the luncheon. The overall feedback from the luncheon was very positive and is a testament to the value of the Initiative and the need to remain engaged and vigilant as we work to include males and fathers in MCH programs.

In addition to the luncheon, there were three interactive workshops that were selected from 79 abstracts to be a part of the conference. Each of the workshops had great attendance with a larger than normal number of fathers (consumers and non-consumers) and men present. It was evident that the membership and the Association genuinely embrace the value of male involvement within Healthy Start programs, as demonstrated by the large attendance to the workshops. It is clear that the Association will continue to be a pacesetter

in this very important work.

The next phase of the work of the MI Cohort will focus on three key areas:

1. Attitude Of Inclusion
2. Marketing / Toolkit Development and Materials
3. Research

These areas continue to be of great importance among the current volunteer leadership of the MI Cohort, the National Staff and NHSA Board representative. Our next step is to develop a workplan that will expand the work that has been done by the volunteer leadership to include the over 45 new people who signed up during the conference, joining the already 125 plus existing Cohort volunteers. Be on the watch for the next update expected later in the summer as we head towards the fall.

Finally, a number of Male Involvement programs planned activities for Father's Day, June 20th. This was a great opportunity to highlight the value of dads, fathers and male involvement. Highlighting fathers and dads should not be an "honorable mention only" activity, but an event that truly celebrates their value in spite of the challenge that can come with finding a large number of role models. You are encouraged to send the MI Cohort examples of what you did in recognition of Father's Day so that we can catalog and share with other projects and programs.

Thank you for reading our corner and we hope you had a Happy Father's Day!

Ken Scarborough is the Male Involvement Coordinator at REACHUP, Inc.

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The National Healthy Start Association is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. Its mission is to promote the development of community-based maternal and child health programs, particularly those addressing the issues of infant mortality, low birth weight and racial disparity.

message from THE PRESIDENT

I must say, at times, the last two months have felt like a roller coaster ride, full of excitement with a hinge of alarm. However, each month I am more convinced that the NHTA network has everything we need to succeed in fulfilling our vision and mission.

This confidence of success is shared by the newly appointed Board Committee Chairs of the NHTA Board of Directors:

- Government Relations Committee: Mario Drummonds-New York, NY
- Membership Services Committee: Judith Hill-Omaha, NE
- Finance Committee: Risë Ratney- Hammond, IN
- Strategy & Organizational Sustainability: Alma Roberts- Baltimore, MD
- Board Governance Committee: Cindi Garcia-San Antonio, TX
- Advisory Committee: Kenn Harris-New Haven, CT

The NHTA Board of Directors and Staff have been quite busy since our last communication. Upon returning from a successful Board Development Retreat, June 6, 2010 in Cambridge, MD, we have been actively seeking to elevate the visibility as well as strengthen the validity and reliability of our Healthy Start Model as an effective cohort. To that end, NHTA has established a new workgroup focused on evaluation, and you will hear later in the month about how you can participate in meaningful ways. In addition, over the past three weeks a committee has convened to create a white paper that will demonstrate the effectiveness of the Healthy Start Initiative as it relates to home visitation.

This white paper will showcase our strengths and competencies, making certain that our funders, legislators and other potential supporters know that we represent a "shovel ready" network that can provide an array of core services provided through evidence-based and promising

home visitation practices. Additionally, we seek to effectively communicate that federal Healthy Start programs place community engagement and mobilization at the center of all thought and action. Our approach increases civic engagement, utilizes social capital and fosters resiliency in communities by building on the strengths and assets of caring citizens who take responsibility for themselves, their families and their communities. It is our hope to have this available in early August 2010.



We would like to extend our gratitude to our esteemed consultants Dr. Vijaha Hogan, Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Maternal and Child Health at the University of North Carolina, Diane Rowley, MD, MPH, Professor of the Practice of Public Health, Maternal and Child Health, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health and Dr. Fleda Mask Jackson, Affiliated Professor /Applied Public Health, Rollings School of Public Health, Atlanta, GA, for their guidance and direction as we create this very important document.

In closing, I look forward to the NHTA network working together to:

- influence policy and practice in maternal and child health arenas;
- leverage additional funding (i.e. home visitation for our projects); and
- build our capacity for research and evaluation with scientific rigor.

Moving Forward Together,

Estrellita "Lo" Berry

Estrellita "Lo" Berry, President
 NHTA Board of Directors

greetings from

THE NATIONAL OFFICE

As we embark on another summer, I am reminded of the days when I was a child and how I longed for those extra long hours of sun giving me more time to do whatever. In my mind, I had more time to be creative, to dream and to think about what I wanted to accomplish by the end of the summer. Recently, I found myself thinking about those same things as I looked at the months ahead. For most of us, the summer is a time to relax, get back on track from the hectic schedules and to re-group. I love that about this time of the year and will be doing a lot of that too. However, this summer will also be about seizing opportunities for NHSA, using the extra daylight to think of how we can be more creative as an organization and working on those things that I want to accomplish by September.



A busy year lies ahead for NHSA, the Board of Directors and the membership. We are in the process of reviewing proposals from companies who would like to re-design our NHSA website. We hope to launch the website by early 2011, just in time for the Annual Spring Conference. The NHSA Board of Directors will be meeting over the summer to develop a strategic plan for the next three years. We know this is extremely important as we approach the 20th Anniversary of the Healthy Start Initiative. Our roadmap for the future is key to building upon our successes. September is National Infant Mortality Awareness Month (NIMAM), and we are only a few months away. We are so excited about our new campaign name, *Celebrate Day 366...Every Baby Deserves a Chance*. NHSA will be collaborating with our partners and members to make this one of the best NIMAM observances ever! Look out for a new toolkit and upcoming events for September in the days to come.

With the conference just months away, we are already in planning mode! The 2011 NHSA Annual Spring Conference will be March 6-9, 2011 in Washington, DC and it will be a very special conference. September 2011 will mark 20 years of the Healthy Start program, and we are planning some wonderful activities during the conference to celebrate. Be sure to check our website regularly for updates.

Lastly, I will be on the road a few times this summer visiting Healthy Start projects and learning more about the wonderful work that they do for families. I am excited about this last activity the most because it allows me to leave Washington, DC and see first-hand the impact we have on moms, dads and babies.

Yes, there is so much to accomplish this summer and beyond, but I urge you to take the moments to enjoy those long walks outside, rekindle relationships with friends and family, and just do nothing if you want. This really is a time to re-group and get our minds back into focus as we all prepare for the rest of 2010 and what is yet to come.

Wishing you a safe, happy and fun summer!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacey D. Cunningham'.

Stacey D. Cunningham, MSW, MPH
Executive Director

SAVE THE DATE!

NHSA 12th Annual Spring Conference
March 6-10, 2011

Hyatt Regency Washington on
Capitol Hill
Washington, DC

PARTNER'S CORNER:

CityMatCH - the national organization representing urban maternal and child health programs in local health departments - has enjoyed a long-standing partnership with the National Healthy Start Association. The missions of our organizations have made us natural partners. In fact, in many U.S. cities, CityMatCH member health departments and local Healthy Start projects are vital allies in improving the lives of women, children and families.

Over the past two years, it has been a pleasure to formalize some of our collaborative efforts through the Partnership to Eliminate Disparities in Infant Mortality (PEDIM), which also includes the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP). PEDIM's first initiative, the Infant Mortality and Racism Action Learning Collaborative, has already been featured in the Winter 2010 NHSA newsletter, so I'd like to take a moment to tell you about three other CityMatCH activities that could directly benefit your Healthy Start program.

1. **The 20th Anniversary CityMatCH Conference** is fast approaching! Healthy Start projects have been attending our annual conference for many years, so we hope that this year will be no exception as we gather in Chicago, September 11-14th to *Celebrate! Urban Maternal and Child Health Leadership* [see www.citymatch.org/Conference]. Highlights of this year's conference include *The Deadliest Disease* (a preconference workshop for understanding and addressing racism in health care systems), a plenary on MCH storytelling and numerous breakout sessions featuring local MCH practices.

2. CityMatCH, in partnership with Contra Costa Health Services in California, recently launched the Online MCH Life Course Toolbox [see www.citymatch.org/lifecoursetoolbox]. The toolbox is designed to:

- offer a central location for sharing life course tools and resources;
- provide a discussion board for professionals to share best practices and ideas; and
- maintain a registry of professionals to share the latest in life course work.

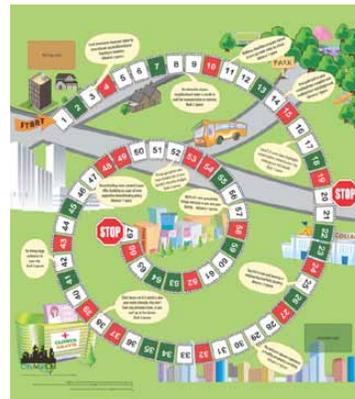
The toolbox is also the new home of the Life Course Game, which debuted at the 2008 CityMatCH Conference [see <http://citymatch.org/lifecoursetoolbox/gameboard.php>]. The game is available for purchase from the website as a Facilitator's Kit, which includes three complete game sets—sufficient to conduct the game with up to 30 people. The Life Course Game can be used in a variety of settings to raise general awareness of the myriad of risks and protective factors that determine a person's life course (poverty, race, environment, etc.).



3. Finally, CityMatCH continues to help communities use the Perinatal Periods of Risk Approach (PPOR) for preventing infant mortality in U.S. Urban Communities [see http://www.citymatch.org/ppor_index.php]. PPOR brings community stakeholders together to build consensus, support and partnership around infant mortality data. The initial data are fetal-infant mortality numbers, rates, and rate differences (or disparities) which are organized according to four risk periods. Causes of death tend to be similar within each period, so when a community finds that its problems lie in only one or two periods, efforts can be focused on those. Further analysis then helps a community determine specific risk and protective factors that are most likely to be contributing to infant mortality disparities. The PPOR approach is an effective way for communities to mobilize and prioritize actions based on the best evidence available. Healthy Start projects are encouraged to participate in any of CityMatCH's PPOR training workshops, and if you are already implementing PPOR, please join our national Learning Network to share your PPOR experiences and learn from others [see http://citymatch.org/ppor_net.php].

CityMatCH considers the National Healthy Start Association and local Healthy Start projects to be critical partners in improving the health and well being of urban women, children and families. We hope that CityMatCH products and services can continue to benefit you and your projects on the local level, and, as partners, we will continue to promote local MCH on the national level.

Patrick Simpson is the Executive Director of CityMatCH.



SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL INFANT MORTALITY AWARENESS MONTH

CELEBRATE DAY 366...EVERY BABY DESERVES A CHANCE

In 2005, Congressman Michael C. Burgess, 26th District of Texas, introduced Resolution 402 directing Congress to observe September as National Infant Mortality Awareness Month (NIMAM), and the U.S. House of Representatives passed the resolution in September 2006. Last September, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution that expressed continued support for “efforts to reduce infant deaths, low-birth weight, pre-term births and disparities in perinatal outcomes.” The resolution (S. Res. 299) passed the Senate by unanimous consent and represented the first time in four years that the Senate passed a resolution specifically focused on infant mortality and the importance of community-based services such as outreach, home visitation, case management, health education and interconception care. In addition, the U.S. House passed a similar resolution (H.Res.260) expressing support for improved prenatal care and the need to improve birth outcomes in this country. This marked the first time ever that both the House and Senate have passed infant mortality resolutions in the same year.

This year NHSA hopes to make our National Infant Mortality Awareness Campaign, *Celebrate Day 366...Every Baby Deserves a Chance*, another monumental event! We are currently in the process of planning activities, creating materials to commemorate the month and revamping our NIMAM toolkit. We would also like to hear about the activities you have planned for National Infant Mortality Awareness Month! Please send us information on your events, so that we can include them on the NHSA NIMAM calendar for September.

SAVE THE DATE!

Fall Healthy Start Leadership Training Institute

Please mark your calendars for the next Healthy Start Leadership Training Institute! We look forward to hosting the Healthy Start project directors and staff November 17-18, 2010. This time we are planning to take you out of the Washington, DC area for a change of scenery. When all details are finalized, you will receive information on location, hotel reservations and the application process.

The fall session will include the following tracks:

- Track 1: Healthy Start Strategies for Success
- Track 2: Leadership Practices for Managers
- Track 3: Grants from A to Z
- Track 4: Meeting Leadership Challenges with Inspiration
- Track 5: Developing Community-Based Leaders and Sustaining and Growing a Healthy Start Program

This will also be a great opportunity for you to meet and network with other Healthy Start project directors and staff, as well as the NHSA Staff.

To ask questions or for more information, contact Phyllis George at pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Appropriations Process off to a Grim Start

U.S. House of Representatives Democrats have unveiled a one-year spending plan that would provide about \$7 billion less for fiscal 2011 spending bills than President Obama requested. It is unlikely that Congress will complete the annual appropriations process by the time the new federal fiscal year begins on October 1. Recognizing growing public concern with the enormous federal deficit, House budget leaders also plan to call on committee chairmen to identify wasteful spending under their jurisdiction.

Earlier this year, 25 U.S. Senators and 25 Members of the U.S. House signed onto an appropriations letter in support of increased funding for Healthy Start. The letter, delivered to the Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate in March, requested \$120 million in funding for the Healthy Start program, which is currently funded at \$105 million. The President requested \$110 million for the program for 2011.

Prevention and Public Health Fund

The health care reform law includes \$500 million in fiscal year 2010 for a Prevention and Public Health Fund. This funding must be spent on prevention and wellness programs authorized by the Public Health Service Act, such as Healthy Start. On June 18, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced that half of this funding would go to increase the number of clinicians and strengthen the primary care workforce in this country. The remaining \$250 million will go to the following prevention and public health programs:

- **Community and Clinical Prevention:** \$126 million will support federal, state and community prevention initiatives; the integration of primary care services into publicly funded community-based behavioral health settings; obesity prevention and fitness; and tobacco cessation.
- **Public Health Infrastructure:** \$70 million will support state, local and tribal public health infrastructure and build state and local capacity to prevent, detect and respond to infectious disease outbreaks.
- **Research and Tracking:** \$31 million for data collection and analysis; to strengthen CDC's Community Guide by supporting the Task Force on Community Preventive Services; and to improve transparency and public involvement in the Clinical Preventive Services Task Force.
- **Public Health Training:** \$23 million to expand CDC's public health workforce programs and public health training centers.

NHSA has urged Secretary Sebelius to include no less than \$25 million (5% of the fund) to strengthen and expand existing Healthy Start programs. The Public Health Fund will continue to grow each year, eventually reaching \$2 billion in fiscal year 2014 and each year thereafter.

Funding for Home Visitation Programs

All 50 states are in the process of conducting a needs assessment to identify communities that have few quality home visitation programs and are at risk for poor maternal and child health outcomes. \$100 million in federal funding is available for states to implement evidence-based maternal, infant and early childhood home visitation programs. Grantees are required to measure improvement in maternal and child health, childhood injury prevention, school readiness and achievement, crime or domestic violence, family economic self-sufficiency and coordination with community resources. NHSA continues to encourage Healthy Start projects to work closely with their state MCH office and office of Head Start to ensure that Healthy Start coalitions are included as part of the assessment process and eventual program implementation.

Jon Terry is the President of Capitol Youth Strategies, LLC and Government Relations Consultant for NHSA.

Thank you text4baby!

Thanks to support from its founding text4baby sponsor Johnson & Johnson, the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition is able to provide free samples of four text4baby posters to all of the Healthy Start projects! Soon, you will be receiving a packet in the mail containing the 4 sample posters (they are folded, 18"x24", full-color posters) and a cover letter with instructions for obtaining additional supplies. Keep a look out for this mailing!



To learn more about the text4baby program, visit www.text4baby.org.

CONSUMER SPOTLIGHT: ERIC GOLDEN

Fathers for a Lifetime (FFL) was created to compliment the support services being provided to women and children through the Omaha Healthy Start (OHS) HealthNET case management program. Fathers for a Lifetime offers custodial and non-custodial fathers, expectant fathers, incarcerated fathers and young men planning to become fathers an opportunity to share information, find support and network in a relaxed learning environment. Together they engage in an eleven week series of classes designed to instill in each man the concept that fathering is a lifetime commitment that must be honored for the benefit of their children, their families and their community.

Eric Golden was divorced in late 2004, and his wife made the decision to leave her two children in his care. After being awarded custody of the children, Eric became involved with drugs and the children were removed from his care and placed into the Iowa state foster care system. Depressed about losing his children, Eric was listening to the radio and heard the advertisement about the FFL class and thought it would help him. He became sober and believed that there was a good chance that he would regain custody of his children. Recognizing the daunting task ahead of him and the knowledge that seeking support services is an important part of sustaining recovery efforts, Eric decided to seek help and made contact with FFL staff.

Eric has been an active and very inspirational participant with Omaha Healthy Start's Fathers for a Lifetime program and the OHS consortium since graduating from the FFL eleven week education sessions in 2005. In 2006 because of his desire to increase his involvement with FFL, he became a member of the Omaha Healthy Start Consortium. In 2009, Eric was selected to be a representative of the Healthy Start Consortium to attend the National Healthy Start Association Annual Spring Conference in Washington D.C. The FFL outreach care coordinator recalls, "Eric and I shared a hotel room together and his energy level for the conference was overwhelming. Nightly, he and I conducted a review of the day's meetings and break-out sessions. On our first day, Eric jumped in helping with the set-up, as well as, helping the last day with the question and answer period of the breakfast. Eric still talks about being able to walk the halls of Rayburn Office Building and meeting the Nebraska Representative, The Honorable Lee Terry".

The benefits that Eric gained from the program cannot be measured by a chart or numbers. In Eric's own words, "I have and continue to benefit from the support that FFL has and continues to give me." Through the FFL educational sessions, Eric learned that his experience was shared by many other men of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Eric found camaraderie through the alumni

group, and he was successful in identifying community-based resources to support him in providing for his children. Eric found a voice and a place to share his story – both triumphs and trials. Not only has Eric found a purpose for his continued desire to give back and help other men believe in the possibility and power of recovery, he has made it his personal goal to use Fathers for a Lifetime as that vehicle.



Eric Golden, 29 year old, single father of two children: Jusselle Golden, 9 years old and Eric Golden Jr., 7 years old.

Eric's outreach includes working to develop a single recovering dads program through his church. He is still seeking additional avenues to introduce FFL to other men in recovery.

In addition to gaining full custody of his children since joining FFL Eric has been able to add several accomplishments to his resume:

- Eric made the President's Honor Roll in 2007, while still wearing the dual hat of being a single father and a college student.
- In February 2007, Eric was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa society, an international society of 2 year colleges.
- On June 17, 2007 (Father's Day), the Daily Nonpareil (a Council Bluffs, Iowa newspaper) ran an article in which he was featured as the Council Bluff's Father of the Year. This article detailed his journey from substance abuse to recovery and the obstacles he faced as a single father. Throughout the article he credits Fathers for a Lifetime for its impact in his life.
- On May 15, 2010, Eric graduated from Iowa Western Community College with a degree in Pre Social Work. This degree will allow him to transfer to a four-year accredited college/university where he will be able to complete his quest for a degree in Social Work. Eric has already applied to University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) for their Social work program and out of 30 people who applied from Iowa Western; he was 1 of 15 granted admission into the Social Work program at UNO. Eric will be the first in his immediate family to obtain a college degree.

In July 2010, the Omaha Healthy Start and Fathers for a Lifetime family will host a post graduation celebration in Eric's honor as a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

part of its June 2010 consortium meeting. This small celebration will also mark Eric's final OHS consortium meeting. With plans to further his education, Eric will no longer be able to participate in evening meetings, but it is the desire of the OHS staff that Eric continues his journey of self-improvement. Every effort will be made to provide Eric a variety of opportunities that will call on his experiences, his continued journey towards recovery and his education as a social worker to promote father/male involvement in the OHS service area. Eric is proud and happy to let anyone know that he is 5 years sober and counting. Omaha Healthy Start and Fathers for a Lifetime invites our 104 Healthy Start projects to join them in wishing Eric Golden the best as he continues to exemplify the benefits associated with our work around father/male involvement.

*Kathy Tyree is a Program Manager at Omaha Healthy Start.
Paul F. Burnett is the Fathers for a Lifetime Outreach Care Coordinator at Omaha Healthy Start.*

NHSA IS MOVING!

We are happy to announce that the National Healthy Start Association will be moving to a new office in August! Our new office is located in the fast paced, business district of McPherson Square. The new space is much larger and will give us more space to expand our staff and host national meetings and small conferences.

The office numbers and e-mail will be the same. You will be notified when we have moved in and are ready for business. For now, please make note of our new address:

1411 K Street, NW
Suite 1350
Washington, DC 20005
Effective August 1, 2010

Thank you all for your continued support of our organization!

Healthy Start in the News

Healthy Babies Healthy Start (HBHS), Kalamazoo, MI, established the "Healthy Babies Healthy Start Arthur James Award" to recognize individuals or organizations that have a positive impact on improving lives of mothers and infants in the community. This award was established in Honor of Dr. Arthur James, who we consider the founding father of Healthy Babies Healthy Start in Kalamazoo, to acknowledge a lifetime contribution to the health of mothers and children and his unrelenting advocacy for the elimination of racial disparities. The first annual award was bestowed upon Dr. Michael Liepman for his Mother Mind Matters Initiative, a holistic approach on perinatal depression done in collaboration with HBHS that had unprecedented success in detection and treatment of perinatal depression in our community. On the award day, May 4, 2010, recognition of Dr. James and Dr. Liepman included proclamations from U. S Senator Debbie Stabenow, Michigan Governor, Jennifer Granholm, State Senator Tom George and State Representative Robert Jones. In addition, Dr. James was recognized by the City of Kalamazoo, the County of Kalamazoo and Borgess Healthy Board of Trustees (a local hospital). The award ceremony was preceded by the presentation of HBHS most recent local research study, "The Impact of Case Management on Racial Disparities," an evaluation made by our independent evaluator, Catherine Kothari, that evidences that HBHS case management intervention has actually diminished racial disparities in pregnancy outcomes for our participants.

In addition, there is a new study showing how Healthy Babies Healthy Start has brought premature births and low-birth-weight babies among its high-risk black clients down to levels slightly below the rates for whites in the target areas' general population. To read more about the study and the wonderful work that Healthy Babies Healthy Start is doing in Kalamazoo, MI, please visit http://www.mlive.com/living/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2010/05/healthy_babies_cuts_risks_of_b.html.

Has your Healthy Start project been in the news lately? Send links to newspaper articles, TV news stories or radio and TV PSAs to info@nationalhealthystart.org so they can be shared with your fellow members.



RESEARCH NEWS – FAST FACTS & HOT STATS:

IMPROVING PATERNAL INVOLVEMENT IN PREGNANCY OUTCOMES

Assembled in 2009, the Commission on Paternal Involvement in Pregnancy Outcomes (CPIPO) is an interdisciplinary working group of scholars from the social sciences and public health community whose goal is to raise public awareness of the need for paternal involvement in pregnancy and family health. CPIPO came up with a list of recommendations that are intended to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in pregnancy outcomes by offering best and promising practices to address policy barriers and increase the involvement of men and expectant fathers in maternal and child health research and clinical practice.

On May 20, 2010, The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and U.S. Representative Danny K. Davis (D-IL) convened a briefing on Capitol Hill discussing these best practices. The meeting brought together a panel of experts including, Jermaine Bond, PhD, Research Associate for the Joint Center, Willie Parker, MD, MPH, Medical Director for Planned Parenthood of Washington, DC, Roland Warren, MBA, President of the National Fatherhood Initiative, Amina Alio, PhD, Research Assistant Professor of the College of Public Health, Community and Family Health at the University of South Florida, and Michael Lu, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of the University of California, Los Angeles School of Medicine and Public Health.

Here is a summary of the findings from the report:

BACKGROUND

- Several historical developments (slavery, declining employment opportunities for Black men, increasing workforce participation for Black women, and welfare policies favoring single mothers) have resulted in father absence from African-America families (Lu, Jones, Bond, 2010);
- Statistics show that seventy percent of African American children are born to unmarried mothers and forty percent of all children regardless of race, live in homes without fathers (Martin et al 2003);
- While much has been written about fathers' influences on child health and development, little is known about the male partners' influences on maternal health;
- The quality of involvement of an expectant father in the post-natal months is dependent on his level of involvement during the preceding 9 months of pregnancy;
- Expectant fathers are open and offer a rewarding opportunity for practitioners to engage;
- Fletcher and colleagues (2004) found that even though antenatal classes helped prepare fathers for childbirth, they had not done so with respect to lifestyle and relationship changes after the birth;

- Although this brief is intended to address general paternal involvement in pregnancy outcomes, it is important to be sensitive to the many barriers faced by men of color, given the significant racial and ethnic disparities in pregnancy outcomes.

BEST AND PROMISING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce the “marriage penalty” in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to allow deductions on the second earner’s income
- Amend Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to include paid parental leave (maternal and paternal)
- Eliminate the distinction between single-parent and two-parent families in determining Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) eligibility

BEST AND PROMISING PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

- CDC, medical societies and other relevant agencies should promote awareness among healthcare providers that all men of reproductive age should be asked about their reproductive life plan at every routine clinical visit
- Health plans, school health and other public and private entities should expand current efforts to increase access to and quality of primary and preventive care for young men in middle school, high school, and in college

For the complete report and a listing of the findings and recommendations, please visit www.jointcenter.org/hpi.

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is one of the nation's leading research and public policy institutions and the only one whose work focuses primarily on issues of particular concern to African Americans and other people of color. The Joint Center is celebrating its 40th Anniversary this year. To learn more, please visit www.jointcenter.org.

The Joint Center's Health Policy Institute (HPI) was launched eight years ago to play a leadership role in reframing debates on health and refocusing attention on dangerous health disparities. Our research and analysis is helping generate new policy recommendations and provide solutions for longstanding health equity.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

July

- **19-21: UIC School of Public Health 20th Annual Maternal and Child Health Leadership Conference; Leadership, Legacy, and Community: A Retreat to Advance Maternal and Child Health Scholarship and Practice.** Visit <http://www.uic.edu/sph/mch> for more information.
- **27-29: Florida Association Healthy Start Coalition (FAHSC) Conference, Educating, Supporting and Caring for the Health of Florida's Pregnant Women and Babies.** To register, visit <http://www.healthystartflorida.com/training.asp>.

August

- **18: Family Violence Prevention Fund hosts a webinar titled "Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Helath Cares About Domestic Violence Day: Resources and Planning."** For more information, visit www.endabuse.org/health.
- The United States Congress will be in Recess

September

- **National Infant Mortality Awareness Month**
 - Please visit the NHTSA website, and our partner OMH, for a detailed list of activities and events across the nation to commemorate the month.
NHTSA: <http://www.healthystartassoc.org/hswpp4.html>
OMH: <http://www.omhrc.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlID=542>
 - Please send us NIMAM activities/events your project is planning, so that we can help spread the word. Send information to info@nationalhealthystart.org.
- **11-14: 20th Anniversary CityMatCH Conference, Celebrate! Urban Maternal and Child Health Leadership, Chicago, IL.** For registration information, visit http://www.citymatch.org/conf_index.php.

October

- **13: Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day.** For information, visit www.endabuse.org/hcadvd.
- **20: The Maternal and Child Health Bureau Federal/State Partnership Meeting - 75th Anniversary Commemoration of the enactment of Title V of the Social Security Act.** Please visit the meeting website at www.hrsa.gov/mchb75, where you can find additional meeting information and updates. Further information on the meeting, including registration information and details regarding the meeting agenda, will be provided as it becomes available. Please direct any questions to mch75thanniversary@hrsa.gov.