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## **Quality Home Visiting within Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Care and Education Agenda** **Protecting and strengthening access to and the effectiveness of high-quality programs**

High-quality voluntary home visiting programs are an essential ingredient to keeping children and families safe and healthy as well as foundational to a child's school readiness and success. These quality programs, which have been championed by bipartisan policy makers and Governor Corbett, work to keep pregnant and post-partum moms and babies connected to critical services inclusive of but also beyond health care.

The benefit of such programs extends beyond the individual child and family as they work to strengthen our communities by helping to reduce the effects of crime, delinquency, and school dropout and failures. They also work to promote self-sufficiency reducing government expenditures on welfare cash grants, Medicaid, and other safety net services. Effectively trained home visitors help to build the confidence and competence of a child's first teachers – their parents.

These high quality programs must remain a core ingredient to how Pennsylvania fulfills its commitment to the early care and education of the state's children.

Federal guidance about the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MCHVP) and Governor Corbett's proposed budget have the potential to impact the state's implementation of and investment in high quality programs. These evolving decisions warrant high-level attention and leadership.

The Protect Our Children Committee (POCC), which is dedicated to preventing child abuse and achieving intentional child welfare reforms, believes it important to achieve timely understanding about the following issues:

- 1. Will federal MCHVP funds be available to any/all of the evidence-based home visiting models to ensure that local identified risks drive access to the most appropriate services?**
- 2. Does the elimination of state funding for Community-Based Family Centers reduce access to evidence-based services for young children after June 30th?**
- 3. How will the state ensure that it meets its Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for MCHVP?**

Beyond reaching clarification on these questions, POCC believes now is the right time for a statewide dialogue and action plan that effectively positions Pennsylvania to maximize public and private resources and expertise to grow the reach of high-quality home visiting programs

### *An Inventory of Home Visiting Programs in Pennsylvania*

Last July, it was announced that Pennsylvania was among the 55 [grantees awarded funding](#) through the MCHVP. This new mandatory program was included within the Affordable Care Act (federal health care reform) with a projected appropriation of \$1.5 billion over the next five years. State eligibility for the funding requires a state Maintenance of Effort (MOE).

“The funds are intended to assure effective coordination and delivery of critical health, development, early learning, child abuse and neglect prevention, and family support services” through voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs. The Obama Administration [expects that this new](#) program will play a “crucial role” in the national pursuit “to build quality, comprehensive statewide early childhood systems for pregnant women, parents and caregivers, and children.”

On February 8<sup>th</sup> a federal [Supplemental Information Request \(SIR\)](#) included specific models that “meet the criteria for evidence-based” and are eligible for the federal funds. The models include:

- Early Head Start – Home-based option
- Family Check Up
- Healthy Families America
- Healthy Steps
- Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- Parents as Teachers

An initial inventory of PA home visiting models meeting the federal criteria reveals that 3 of the 7 programs are operational in the state including:

- **Early Head Start (EHS)** is an evidence-based program targeting low-income pregnant women and families with children from birth through age 3 years the majority of whom are at or below federal poverty guidelines and eligible for Part C services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This federally funded community-based program also received funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Pennsylvania received approximately \$19 million in ARRA funding to connect an additional 1,700 children to EHS creating 125 jobs. In all more than 4,000 Pennsylvania children are now connected to EHS. A central discussion point going forward relates to the impact of evaporating federal funds for EHS.
- **Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)** is an evidence-based home visiting model that serves first-time moms early in their pregnancy continuing through their child’s 2nd birthday. NFP has served more than 13,000 Pennsylvania families in the Commonwealth since 1999. NFP receives a state appropriation of \$11.978 million. Pennsylvania is one of four statewide NFP initiatives with 22 current NFP grantees serving 40 counties benefitting approximately 4,600 children. Beyond state general funds, NFP services are eligible for reimbursement through Medicaid. Governor Corbett’s budget level funds NFP and includes the MCHVP dollars (\$2.07 million this year and projected at \$5.1 million in FY 2011-2012) within the NFP appropriation. The federal MCHVP funds, however, have been described as more of a “place holder” for home visiting services overall versus a singular investment in NFP. 178 nurse home visitors and supervisors are employed by NFP sites across the Commonwealth.

- **Parents as Teachers (PAT)** was initially launched through the Department of Education (PDE) and now PAT evidence-based services are part of the comprehensive family support strategy put forth by the state’s 29 Family Centers. The current \$6.25 million state appropriation for Family Centers is administered in part by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF). Approximately 4,200 children receive PAT services. State funding for Community-Based Family Centers is eliminated in Governor Corbett’s budget. Federal funding remains intact and is shifted into the overall child welfare line item. The exact implications of the eliminated state funding on the Family Centers overall and PAT home visiting services in particular, requires further insight into the budget proposal. Finally, some EHS Programs utilize the evidence-based Parent as Teachers (PAT) curriculum within their home visiting services.

**Healthy Families America**, which is a program of Prevent Child Abuse America, has shaped home visiting services in Wyoming County and there appears to be an emerging discussion in Luzerne County about launching HFA, but at this time there remain no official HFA sites in the Commonwealth. That may change in the near future, however, because the Commonwealth now has an official Prevent Child Abuse Chapter. The PCA-PA Chapter, which is housed at The American Academy of Pediatrics, intends “to create a unified, statewide approach to the prevention of child abuse in all its forms,” including quality home visiting services.

Beyond these evidence-based programs included in the federal SIR, the state appropriated \$2.084 million in the current fiscal year to **Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP)** – a research-based early literacy home visiting program. National PCHP officials have asked the federal government to reconsider its decision not to include PCHP within the enumerated evidence-based programs eligible for MCHVP dollars. Governor Corbett’s proposed budget would eliminate funding for PCHP – a program available to children in 25 counties serving approximately 1,500 children.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, the Department of Health partners with community-based programs on **Healthy Start and Title V programs** to improve maternal and child outcomes.

Finally, there are home visiting services purchased by the counties as part of their Needs Based Budget (NBB) – child welfare services.

### **Identifying, Appropriately Responding to Risks**

Over the last year POCC has convened external stakeholders to provide feedback and direct assistance to the state as it prepared for the implementation of MCHVP. POCC’s engagement and influence sought to improve the state’s required assessment by offering child-centered data points and insight aimed at maximizing the benefits of limited public funds.

PA’s anticipated first year MCHVP grant is approximately \$2.07 million. The SIR released on February 8<sup>th</sup> suggests that Pennsylvania will remain eligible for its base grant of \$2.07 million through federal FY 2015.

However, any federal investment beyond that base grant will occur only after a competitive process. The competitive funds will be awarded based on a state’s “capacity and commitment to improve child outcomes specified in the statute through improvements in service coordination and the implementation of home visiting programs with fidelity to high-quality, evidence-based models.”

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<sup>1</sup> The funding for PCHP is contained within the Community-Based Family Center appropriation and is within the jurisdiction of OCDEL.

In accordance with the SIR, the state must now prepare an updated plan based on a comprehensive needs assessment, which is due this spring. And going forward the state must demonstrate a systemic, coordinated strategy for evidence-based home visiting services driven to the most at-risk populations and implemented with fidelity and quality if it hopes to secure on-going funding.

The SIR raises the bar for Pennsylvania to have a comprehensive, clearly articulated and effectively implemented state strategy for evidence-based home visiting services.

After undertaking a comprehensive needs assessment build upon OCDEL's Reach and Risk report, 18 counties (grouped into 10 eligible grantees) were invited to respond to a Letter of Intent (LOI) last December. The counties eligible for the ten thousand dollar planning grants and MCHVP funding for service delivery include: **Berks, Cameron/McKean/Clinton, Dauphin/Perry, Greene/Fayette, Mifflin, Bradford/Sullivan, Crawford/Forest/Venango, Erie, Jefferson/Clarion and Philadelphia.**

These counties are currently engaged in a local needs assessment to research and identify an evidence-based home visitation strategy that would best address the identified local risk as well as selecting a sponsoring agency to administer the home visiting program.

These assessments were well underway before the February 8<sup>th</sup> SIR and Governor Corbett's proposed budget – both of which impact the state's home visiting strategy going forward. Counties must complete their local needs assessment by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

A fundamental directive from federal government officials has been that the needs of children and families should drive the determination of what program model(s) is projected to produce greatest likelihood of positive maternal and child outcomes. That framing has been central to the local needs assessment.

Now, however, there is uncertainty about the state's exact intentions for the MCHVP funds. One interpretation of Governor Corbett's budget is that these funds will be directed singularly to NFP services. If this were the expressed intention it may present challenges to the local needs assessment especially if the local assessment has demonstrated a need to focus on high risk populations that fall outside the scope of NFP, which is a first-time mom.

Also given the federal MOE requirement questions have arisen as to if and how the state meets its MOE requirement if there is a reduction in evidence-based models like PAT through the Family Centers.

Included below is an effort to better understand the current allocation of Family Center, NFP and PCHP dollars in each county as well as some child-specific data for EHS.

### **Positioning Pennsylvania to Reach More At-Risk Children and Families**

The decision of federal officials to require a competitive approach to a share of the federal MCHVP funds raises the bar for Pennsylvania to have a well designed, articulated, coordinated and outcome driven home visiting strategy.

Beyond reaching clarification and understanding of the earlier identified questions, POCC believes now is the right time for a statewide dialogue and action plan that effectively positions Pennsylvania to maximize public and private resources and expertise. To be effective, this effort should engage the expertise and leadership of external stakeholders and include government officials from across cabinet-level departments. This effort should be intentional in its discussions of and strategies about the following:

- Identification of the most at-risk populations determined by updated and credible data;
- Attention to a coordinated referral and intake system;
- Delivery of high quality services with fidelity to and monitoring of proven models;
- Commitment to a holistic approach to children and their access to a continuum of services;
- Enhanced training, where needed, to cultivate greater understanding of and sensitivity to domestic violence, addiction, steps to self-sufficiency, etc;
- Measured against expected outcomes (e.g., reductions in premature births, lower birth weight babies, child injuries, and increased educational attainment and self-sufficiency); and
- Strengthening public/private partnerships to expand opportunities and improve outcomes.

### Preliminary Inventory of Evidence-Based Home Visiting Programs

COUNTY <sup>2</sup>	Early Head Start (#s of children <b>NOT</b> dollars based on <a href="#">PA Head Start reporting</a> )	Family Centers (state)	Family Center (federal – Title IV-B and Community Based Child Abuse Prevention)	NFP Services (# children served as contracted by OCDEL)
<b>Allegheny</b>	452	921,440	1,064,157	110
<b>Armstrong</b>	128			
<b>Beaver</b>	107			
<b>Bedford</b>	75	80,698	93,203	40
<b>Berks</b> <sup>3</sup>	158	50,138	57,908	150
<b>Blair</b>	0	88,990	102,776	100
<b>Bradford</b> <sup>4</sup>	35	65,230	75,336	
<b>Bucks</b>	0	92,407	106,718	
<b>Cambria</b>	72			75
<b>Cameron</b> <sup>5</sup>	0	57,725	66,668	
<b>Centre</b>				50
<b>Chester</b>	8	153,862	177,692	100
<b>Clarion</b> <sup>6</sup>	84	61,613	71,156	

<sup>2</sup> Counties highlighted in red represent those identified as **High-Risk** in OCDEL’s Reach and Risk Report, those in gray identified as **Moderate-High**, yellow **Moderate-Low** and there is no highlighting for those categorized as low risk counties.

<sup>3</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

<sup>4</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

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COUNTY <sup>2</sup>	Early Head Start (#s of children <b>NOT</b> dollars based on <a href="#">PA Head Start reporting</a> )	Family Centers (state)	Family Center (federal – Title IV-B and Community Based Child Abuse Prevention)	NFP Services (# children served as contracted by OCDEL)
Clearfield	176	151,340	174,780	30
Clinton <sup>7</sup>	<sup>8</sup> 92			
Columbia	0	78,974	91,207	56
Crawford <sup>9</sup>	72			
Cumberland	140			
Dauphin <sup>10</sup>	140	169,930	196,252	65
Delaware	0	101,264	116,951	75
Elk				15
Erie <sup>11</sup>	0	159,007	183,631	100
Fayette <sup>12</sup>	192			125
Forest <sup>13</sup>				
Franklin				25
Fulton	32	81,011	93,560	
Greene <sup>14</sup>	24	145,216	167,731	
Huntingdon	72			75
Indiana	51			
Jefferson <sup>15</sup>	0			30

<sup>6</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

<sup>7</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

<sup>8</sup> Lycoming-Clinton have a total of 92 children between them.

<sup>9</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

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COUNTY <sup>2</sup>	Early Head Start (#s of children <b>NOT</b> dollars based on <a href="#">PA Head Start reporting</a> )	Family Centers (state)	Family Center (federal – Title IV-B and Community Based Child Abuse Prevention)	NFP Services (# children served as contracted by OCDEL)
Lackawanna	29	65,574	75,733	100
Lancaster	24	223,375	257,974	125
Lawrence	22	90,412	104,411	75
Lehigh	201 <sup>16</sup>	123,983	143,181	100
Luzerne	96	115,890	133,849	216
Lycoming	92 <sup>17</sup>			125
McKean <sup>18</sup>	0	156,410	180,641	
Mercer	66	415,078	345,904	
Mifflin <sup>19</sup>	57			
Monroe	0			100
Montgomery	313	144,597	166,992	100
Montour				11
Northampton	201 <sup>20</sup>	147,388	170,224	150
Northumberland				45
Perry <sup>21</sup>	0	71,415	82,480	37
Philadelphia <sup>22</sup>	341			400
Pike	7			11
Schuylkill	0			75
Somerset	0	84,714	97,832	
Snyder				7
Sullivan <sup>23</sup>	0			11

<sup>15</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

<sup>16</sup> Lehigh and Northampton Counties provide EHS to a total of 201 children through Community Services for Children, Inc.

<sup>17</sup> Lycoming-Clinton have a total of 92 children between them.

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<sup>20</sup> Lehigh and Northampton Counties provide EHS to a total of 201 children through Community Services for Children, Inc.

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COUNTY <sup>2</sup>	Early Head Start (#s of children <b>NOT</b> dollars based on <a href="#">PA</a> <a href="#">Head Start reporting</a> )	Family Centers (state)	Family Center (federal – Title IV-B and Community Based Child Abuse Prevention)	NFP Services (# children served as contracted by OCDEL)
Susquehanna	2			22
Tioga	40			
Union	28			
Venango <sup>24</sup>	116			
Washington	48			
Wayne		61,901	71,487	22
Westmoreland	75	151,005	174,429	
Wyoming	0			45
York	100			92

COUNTY <sup>25</sup>	Nurse-Family Partnership State Funding <sup>26</sup>
Allegheny	293,766
Berks <sup>27</sup>	427,064
	1,015,453 <sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Counties highlighted in red represent those identified as **High-Risk** in OCDEL’s Reach and Risk Report, those in gray identified as **Moderate-High**, yellow **Moderate-Low** and there is no highlighting for those categorized as low risk counties.

<sup>26</sup> NFP is level funded in the Corbett 2011-2012 budget at \$11.98 million. It also is projected to receive \$2.54 million in Medicaid funds. The state’s share of the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program are also included in the NFP discussion of the Governor’s 2011-2012 Budget, but it has been described by OCDEL as a placeholder versus direct appropriation to NFP programs.

<sup>27</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

<sup>28</sup> Nurse-Family Partnership services contracted through the Home Nursing Agency of Blair County to serve 300 families in Blair, Cambria, Centre and Huntingdon Counties.

COUNTY <sup>25</sup>	Nurse-Family Partnership State Funding <sup>26</sup>
Blair Cambria Centre Huntingdon	
Bradford <sup>29</sup> Sullivan <sup>30</sup> Wyoming	380,199 <sup>31</sup>
Chester	356,520
Clearfield Elk Jefferson <sup>32</sup>	276,744 <sup>33</sup>
Columbia Luzerne Montour Northumberland Snyder	404,829 <sup>34</sup>
Dauphin <sup>35</sup> Franklin	408,657 <sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

<sup>30</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

<sup>31</sup> Nurse-Family Partnership services contracted with Wyoming County Department of Human Services to provide services to 96 families in Wyoming, Bradford and Sullivan Counties.

<sup>32</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

<sup>33</sup> Nurse-Family Partnership services contracted through Peritech Home Health to serve 75 families in Clearfield, Jefferson and Elk Counties.

<sup>34</sup> Nurse-Family Partnership services contracted with Columbia Montour Home Health Services to serve 125 families in Columbia, Montour, Northumberland and Snyder Counties.

<sup>35</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

<sup>36</sup> Nurse-Family Partnership services contracted through PinnacleHealth System Community Health Center to serve 90 families in Dauphin and Franklin Counties.

COUNTY <sup>25</sup>	Nurse-Family Partnership State Funding <sup>26</sup>
Delaware	365,849
Eric <sup>37</sup>	309,715
Fayette <sup>38</sup>	356,010
Lackawanna Luzerne Susquehanna Wayne	955,809 <sup>39</sup>
Lancaster	372,894
Lawrence	230,109
Lehigh Northampton	943,516 <sup>40</sup>
Lycoming	314,521
Monroe Pike	412,232 <sup>41</sup>
Montgomery	320,664
Perry <sup>42</sup>	127,461 <sup>43</sup>
Philadelphia <sup>44</sup>	1,869,138
Schuylkill	242,320

<sup>37</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

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<sup>39</sup> Nurse-Family Partnership services contracted with Maternal Family Health Services to serve 350 families in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Wayne and Susquehanna Counties.

<sup>40</sup> Nurse-Family Partnership services contract with the Visiting Nurses’ Association of St. Luke’s to serve 250 families in Northampton and Lehigh Counties.

<sup>41</sup> Nurse-Family Partnership services contracted with Pocono Medical Center to serve 111 families in Monroe and Pike Counties.

<sup>42</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

<sup>43</sup> Sadler Health Center contracted to serve 37 families in Perry Counties – the agency has a capacity to serve families in both Cumberland and Perry.

<sup>44</sup> County is included in the 18 counties (10 groupings) engaged in a local needs assessment, eligible for a share of PA’s federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program dollars.

COUNTY <sup>25</sup>	Nurse-Family Partnership State Funding <sup>26</sup>
York	355,349