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Hawaii Department of Health awarded \$3.5 million to support families through Home Visiting Program

HONOLULU – The Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) has been awarded \$3,510,137 in federal funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to support the state’s Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program. The funds will provide voluntary, evidence-based home visiting services to women during pregnancy, and to parents with young children up to kindergarten entry.

“Home visiting services help to ensure our keiki and their families have a healthier start,” said Matthew Shim, DOH Family Health Services Division Chief. “This federal funding will allow the state to continue to provide this important service to expecting mothers and families during a critical time in their child’s development.”

The MIECHV Program serves about 850 Hawaii families each year with more than 10,000 home visits conducted statewide annually. Families are screened for eligibility in birthing hospitals, or families may contact MIECHV contracted providers online at www.yourohana.org to determine their eligibility. Services assist mothers through pregnancy and post-delivery, providing support to mothers learning to breastfeed and care for their baby’s health and early development through no-cost home visiting educational supports. Parents receive counseling to acquire knowledge and understanding of child development milestones and positive parenting

techniques. Assistance is also offered to help families to set goals for the future, continue their education, and find employment and child care solutions.

During federal fiscal year 2016, 93.9 percent of pregnant women enrolled in the program accessed prenatal care before the end of their second trimester. Prenatal care is essential for ensuring the safe birth of a healthy baby. Pregnant women enrolled in the program also reported breastfeeding their infants for an average of 24.6 weeks or for the first 6 months of life as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All of the families enrolled in the program received counseling on the results of the child's developmental screenings, and parents spent more time in adult education programs to move toward economic self-sufficiency by furthering their education.

“The MIECHV Program helps parents and caregivers connect with services and resources and improve the skills they need to support their families' well-being and provide the best opportunities for their children,” said HRSA Associate Administrator for Maternal and Child Health Michael Lu, M.D., M.S., M.P.H. “In these voluntary programs, trained nurses, social workers, early childhood educators, or other trained professionals meet regularly with expectant parents or families with young children in their homes, building strong, positive relationships with families who want and need support.”

Administered by HRSA, in partnership with the Administration for Children and Families, the MIECHV Program gives pregnant women and families, particularly those considered at-risk, necessary resources and skills to raise children who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and ready to learn. Funded through the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 through FY 2017, the MIECHV Program is also addressing HHS' clinical priorities such as the opioid crisis, serious mental illness, and childhood obesity. Nationwide, \$342 million in funding was awarded to 55 states, territories, and nonprofit organizations.

For more information on HRSA's Home Visiting Program, visit

<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/homevisiting>.

For a list of all state and county awardees, visit <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-initiatives/home-visiting/fy17-home-visiting-awards>.

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