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# Promising Practices



## Women, Children & Adolescents

### Partnering to Promote Healthy Babies

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Infant mortality is an important indicator of a nation's health, yet the U.S. ranks 30th behind other developed countries according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There are over 29,000 infant deaths annually in the U.S., a number that has been rising over the past several decades, largely due to the growing premature birth rate. The March of Dimes reports that these premature births are costing the U.S. over \$26 billion annually. Much about the causes of prematurity remains unknown, and advocates are calling for more research and answers.

Sharing what is known about how a healthy pregnancy has a lifelong impact on a child's health is equally important. The National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB), along with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the nation's wireless carriers, and a host of other partners including the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, launched **text4baby** in February of 2010. Text4baby is a **free** service for any expectant or new mother. Simply text "baby" (or "bebe" for Spanish) to 511411 or sign up at [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org) for helpful, educational tips sent three times per week.

To date, text4baby has over 210,000 participants and has more than 500 partners including government agencies, corporations, health plans, academic institutions, professional associations, tribal agencies and

non-profit organizations. According to text4baby staff, public-private partnerships are the driving force for the success and uniqueness of the text4baby service. Health insurers such as Blue Cross Blue Shield plans, Aetna, and 75 other commercial and Medicaid health plans are important and active partners and have developed tailored efforts to promote the use of text4baby among their members.

#### PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The growth of text4baby can be attributed, in part, to the creativity of members of each health care delivery team, working together to promote and support the text4baby service. For example, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC DOHMH) is able to conduct text4baby outreach in a variety of ways due to a grant from the Aetna Foundation, the independent charitable and philanthropic arm of Aetna Inc. NYC is working to promote text4baby by:

- Providing each new mother with a text4baby informational flyer along with the child's birth certificate;
- Placing posters and text4baby flyers in locations throughout the city where women are likely to gather, such as nail and hair salons, Women Infant and Children (WIC) information centers, and laundromats;
- Distributing flyers through NYC DOHMH's Newborn Home Visiting Program during hospital and home recruitment visits;

- Providing informational tool kits to health care providers in targeted low-income areas of the city;
- Creating a dedicated space on the NYC DOHMH website to serve as a resource of information about text4baby and Facebook advertisements to promote text4baby; and
- Convening regular meetings of the New York City text4baby Coalition where lessons learned, best practices and creative outreach ideas are discussed.

Health plans have been instrumental to the success of text4baby due in part to their direct access to pregnant women and new mothers enrolled in their plans. WellPoint, Inc., the largest health insurer in the U.S. in terms of membership, has partnered with text4baby since its inception as a Premier Sponsor. Prior to the launch of text4baby, WellPoint had already initiated preliminary efforts to utilize text messaging to promote a variety of positive health behaviors to their members. After joining on as a text4baby sponsor, WellPoint began promoting the service to Anthem HealthKeepers Plus members in Virginia. Anthem HealthKeepers Plus, offered by HealthKeepers, Inc., is a product available to eligible Medicaid/FAMIS Plus and FAMIS enrollees through HealthKeepers, Inc.'s contract with the Department of Medical Assistance Services. In Virginia, the Department of Health's Infant Mortality Task Force led by the Virginia Commissioner of Health was an early adopter of text4baby with

active dialogue, representation at meetings and provision of promotional materials by HMHB representatives. In addition, the service was also promoted to some of WellPoint's National Account members and soon, to its Medicaid/state sponsored members in Wisconsin and Indiana. WellPoint serves its State Sponsored Business (SSB) members in Wisconsin as Community Connect HealthPlan and in Indiana as Anthem BlueCross BlueShield. WellPoint encourages these members to enroll into text4baby through its Future Moms program, a voluntary prenatal program available to any WellPoint SSB member in these states. By recruiting women through Future Moms, Community Connect HealthPlan, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield and HealthKeepers, Inc. are able to track each woman's progress throughout

**“This is a model project where the public and private sectors work together to provide excellent information to pregnant women throughout the country.”**

**– TEXT4BABY HEALTH PLAN PARTNER**

her pregnancy as well as her child's birth outcomes. WellPoint now works closely with HMHB staff to come up with new ways to promote text4baby and enroll pregnant members, share best practices, and discuss barriers to enrollment.

WellPoint has leveraged additional partnerships to help address the unique health needs of pregnant women. For instance in Wisconsin, Community Connect HealthPlan has an exclusive partnership with Community Advocates, a local organization that provides specialized services to at-risk populations in the Milwaukee area. Community Advocates staff identify pregnant women during welcome calls and initial health risk assessments that are provided to all new members. When a woman self identifies as being pregnant, she is directed to the CommunityConnect

HealthPlan Care Coordinator at Community Advocates who provides her with valuable information about her pregnancy and informs each woman about text4baby. If a woman is identified as being high-risk during the early stages of her pregnancy, she is enrolled into CommunityConnect's high-risk obstetric patient centered medical home pilot program (state-mandated pilot) and is encouraged to sign up for text4baby. Community Advocates staff and CommunityConnect HealthPlan field staff also promote text4baby by distributing text4baby flyers at community events and in community health center home pregnancy kits and during home visits with new and expecting mothers. CommunityConnect HealthPlan is dedicated to the success of the text4baby program and is continually striving to enroll additional eligible members to benefit from the program.

### PLANS FOR EXPANSION & EVALUATION

While text4baby has already reached thousands of women nationwide, the goal is to have one million users by the end of 2012. In order to reach this goal, text4baby is hosting an enrollment contest for states. The three states that enroll the highest number of women through October 2011 will win a sponsored luncheon and a press conference for partners in their states. In addition to states and local partners, national entities such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the White House, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs and others are promoting the enrollment contest through webinars, newsletters, website postings and tweets. The purpose of the contest is to enable more women to take advantage of text4baby and the critical health information that is important to their health and to the health of their infants.

Text4baby is dedicated to internal and external process evaluation of the program. Outreach partners have access to up-to-date zip-code level enrollment data and several ongoing evaluations are currently taking place. These evaluations are being conducted by multiple universities and research institutions and are focusing on a variety of outcome measures including user satisfaction and reactions,

change in user attitudes, behaviors, knowledge and beliefs, cultural and linguistic appropriateness and birth outcomes.

### PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Text4baby is always looking for new partners with innovative ideas to promote the service. Opportunities for health plans and health plan foundations to support text4baby include:

- Incorporating information about text4baby in provider newsletters so that providers in their networks can explain and promote text4baby to pregnant members;
- Incorporating text4baby as a component of their maternity programs and automatically enroll pregnant members in the service;
- Teaming up with a community organization or the local media to promote text4baby at community events to help increase enrollment;
- Helping fund government or community initiatives that promote text4baby;
- Ordering free promotional materials to use in their communities; and
- Becoming a text4baby Outreach Partner by signing up through [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org). While any organization can use the text4baby outreach materials and promote the program, there are many benefits to being a formal text4baby partner.

### ABOUT HMHB AND NIHCM

The National Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies (HMHB) Coalition's mission is to improve the health and safety of mothers, babies and families through educational materials and collaborative partnerships. Learn more at [www.hmhb.org](http://www.hmhb.org).



The National Institute for Health Care Management (NIHCM) Foundation works to engage health insurers in educational activities to improve their programs and policies on maternal and child health and adolescent health issues. The NIHCM Foundation Promising Practices program was created to recognize emerging and promising programs or policies in maternal and child health. Visit us at [www.nihcm.org](http://www.nihcm.org).