

Federal Grant Award from HRSA/MCHB
(First Time Motherhood/New Parents Initiative)

ABCs for Healthy Families
A Social Marketing Campaign for the Integration of the Life-Course Perspective

Wisconsin's Department of Health Services (DHS) was awarded \$497,777 for a 2-year federal grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health Bureau, for the *First Time Motherhood/New Parents Initiative*. The purpose of this grant, fully funded by HRSA, is to integrate the life-course perspective into a social marketing campaign to improve birth outcomes among African American women in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin has one of the worst African American infant mortality rates in the country, as well as the greatest black/white infant mortality ratio; however, this fact is not generally appreciated by the public. Through a social marketing campaign targeted to the central city of Milwaukee and the city of Racine, we will increase the knowledge and improve individual behaviors and community resources to address this problem.

This new grant in Wisconsin will be called *ABCs for Healthy Families: A Social Marketing Campaign for the Integration of the Life-Course Perspective*. *ABCs for Healthy Families* builds upon the *ABCs for Healthy Babies* program, to implement new public health information and increase the public's and providers' knowledge of the importance of integrating the life-course perspective into effective preconceptional and inter-conceptional health care. ("ABCs" refers to *applied behavior changes*.)

DHS will partner with community stakeholders; public- and private-sector agencies; social marketing experts; and low-income African American women of childbearing age, their partners, and families to design and implement *ABCs for Healthy Families*.

The long-term goal of *ABCs for Healthy Families* is to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes in southeastern Wisconsin through the application of social marketing principles and the life-course perspective, within the state's *Framework for Action to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Birth Outcomes (2008-2011)*.
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/healthybirths/

The specific goals of *ABCs for Healthy Families* are the following:

1. Increase the public's and providers' knowledge of the importance of integrating the life-course perspective into preconception/interconception care to improve birth outcomes for African American infants in southeastern Wisconsin;
2. Integrate the life-course perspective into current MCH awareness campaigns;
3. Increase positive birth outcomes by providing linkages to preconception/interconception, prenatal, family support, and social services for low-income African American women and men in Milwaukee and Racine; and
4. Increase father involvement and support couples transitioning into their roles as new parents.

An expected outcome of the project is that the health care needs of low-income African American women will be addressed throughout the life span, especially through the provision of culturally relevant, high-quality, timely preconception, interconception, and prenatal care.