



POLICY PRIORITY: HEALTHY PARENTS & BABIES

Comprehensive Perinatal Supports



Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Advocate for targeted state funding in FY 2025 to improve **equitable access to comprehensive maternal health services, including peripartum mental health care**



Legislation

- Advocate for the passage of state legislation addressing **maternal substance use and child welfare**, prioritizing parent-child attachment and dyadic interventions over an automatic child neglect indication for prenatal drug exposure
- Advocate for the creation of a **state-level diaper allowance** for families struggling to afford diapers as a way to improve child health and reduce parental stress



Administration & Implementation

- Support efforts to **sustainably fund Universal Newborn Support Services (UNSS) through the Family Connects model** in Peoria County and Stephenson County, as well as expansion of Family Connects in the City of Chicago
- Inform implementation of **Medicaid coverage for postpartum care services** performed by doulas, nurse midwives, lactation counselors and consultants, community health workers, public health nurses and medical caseworkers, as mandated under the Improving Health Care for Pregnant and Postpartum Individuals Act (SB 967; Pub. Act 102-665)
- Inform implementation of **cultural competency training for health care provider licensure and renewal**, as mandated by HB 2450 (Pub. Act 103-531)
- Establish **cross-system standards and coordination for doula services** as an enhancement to existing home visiting services
- Explore administrative opportunities to improve **equitable access to community-based treatment for peripartum mental health disorders**
- Advance key strategies within the **Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Action Plan**, administered by the Illinois Department of Public Health
- Uplift the recommendations made by the Illinois Maternal Health Task Force to **improve the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services' Perinatal Report to the General Assembly**



Public Awareness & Engagement

- Continue raising awareness about **maternal morbidity and mortality disparities** by socializing key findings from the expected release of the third Illinois Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Report



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Strengthened Home Visiting System



Local, State & Federal Budgets

- Increase the state line items in FY 2025 for home visiting programs funded through the Illinois State Board of Education (**Prevention Initiative**) by **\$75M** and the Illinois Department of Human Services (**Healthy Families Illinois and Maternal Child Home Visiting**) by **\$5M**, to continue meeting community needs and improving provider compensation



Administration & Implementation

- Ensure **equitable saturation of home visiting capacity across programs** by monitoring allocations and participation rates
- Inform the development of the **Early Childhood Block Grant Request for Proposals** for FY 2025 by uplifting the recommendations of home visiting program staff
- Contribute to the **workforce scan activity** of the **Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5)**
- Assist with and inform the work of the **Early Learning Council's Health and Home Visiting Committee**, including:
 - Develop recommendations for ISBE and IDHS to align requirements, administration, and supports for doula services as a funded component alongside home visiting
 - Develop recommendations to align home visiting program requirements and program standards
 - Support alignment between physical and mental health initiatives and the early learning system



Public Awareness & Engagement

- Increase **public understanding** of home visiting and its benefits
- Leverage results of the Gateways Staffing and Salary Survey, Start Early's Illinois Home Visiting Caregiver and Provider Feedback project, and MIECHV Annual Survey reports to **inform workforce strategies**
- Promote strategies to address **staff wellbeing**

