DHS PROPOSALS TO ADDRESS MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH AND FOSTER CARE

August 9, 2022
DHS will seek federal approval to extend home visitation services to high-risk pregnant women in traditional Medicaid. Evidence-based home visitation programs can improve maternal health outcomes, create better health outcomes for children born to these mothers, and reduce the number of deliveries requiring NICU services.

DHS projects these services will begin in January 2023, making an additional 5,000 pregnant women eligible annually.

DHS is awaiting federal approval to make home visitation services available to high-risk pregnant women in ARHOME.
EXPANDING MEDICAID SERVICES FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

• For some pregnant women in Medicaid, their coverage is limited to only those services that directly relate to the pregnancy.

• DHS will seek federal approval to extend full Medicaid coverage to all pregnant women in Medicaid. Allowing access to full healthcare services, including behavioral health services and care for non-pregnancy medical conditions, will help support a healthy birth for the baby.

• DHS projects this full coverage will begin in January 2023, making more than 2,000 pregnant women eligible for these services annually.
The DHS biennial budget proposal will include a budget request for more state general revenue in SFY 2024 to increase all board payment amounts by 10%.

Many foster parents receive these board payments, now averaging $455 per month, to cover food and shelter for children in foster care. Board payments are also made to many families that adopt or accept guardianship of children through DHS.
Many children who come into foster care are placed in a provisional placement, usually with a relative or a person who already has a strong positive role in the child’s life, since this is often less traumatic for the child. These placements are provisional for the one to six months it takes for the family to be fully licensed as a foster home.

Starting next month, DHS will begin issuing support payments of $240 per month during the time a child is in a provisional placement, under an emergency rule approved by Arkansas Legislative Council in July.
We Care. We Act. We Change Lives.
About Home Visiting

Children who live in poverty or who are at-risk due to medical, developmental, socioeconomic, or other reasons face stressors that can impact normal growth and development. Interventions that occur in these formative years help to mitigate factors that place children at risk of poor outcomes. Home visiting is one such intervention that has been shown to improve outcomes for mothers and children in many areas. In 2011, the Arkansas Department of Health’s Family Health Branch was awarded a grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Education (MIECHV) program. The grant supported the implementation of five home visiting models that provide evidence-based and promising practice programming to Arkansas families during pregnancy and until the children enter kindergarten.
THE FIVE MODELS

- **Nurse-Family Partnership** – focuses on the mother’s health during pregnancy, care of the child, child development, birth spacing, and the mother’s personal growth and development.

- **Healthy Families America** – helps families cope with life’s challenges by building on family strengths.

- **Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters** – promotes school readiness and supports parents as their children’s first teacher.

- **Parents as Teachers** – promotes the optimal early development, learning, and health of children by supporting and engaging their caregivers.

- **Following Baby Back Home** – serves families with medically fragile infants who have been discharged from neonatal intensive care units in the state.

Currently, there are 450 Home Visitors providing services statewide. From September 30, 2020, through September 30, 2021, Home Visiting programs served 1,913 Arkansas families.
Expanding Capabilities of the Program

The ADH is working to reach more women to take advantage of existing home visiting programs and partners through expanded outreach. Additionally, the ADH is funding additional training for home visiting staff. The two areas of additional training are:

- **Components of Care: Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders Certificate Training**
  This training program educates home visitors on Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders, including postpartum depression, that have been shown to be associated with mother-infant bonding impairment, child abuse, child neglect, maternal substance abuse, and self-harm.

- **Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) Certification Training and Exam**
  This certification identifies a professional in lactation counseling who has demonstrated the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to provide clinical breastfeeding counseling and management support to families who are thinking about breastfeeding or who have questions or problems during the course of breastfeeding and lactation.

---

Call line: 1-855-ARK-MOMS (275-6667)

healthy.arkansas.gov
The Arkansas Department of Health is implementing a resource call line where Arkansans can get helpful information for pregnancy resources in their area.
These will include services provided by the ADH and DHS, other agencies, and charitable community services that focus on pregnancy resources such as:

- Pregnancy testing
- Prenatal care to assist in supporting mothers and babies
- Post-natal care to assist in supporting mothers and babies
- Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program
- Medicaid and AR Kids First Health Insurance
- Child Care Assistance and parenting education
- Adoption Services
- Foster Care services
- Transitional Employment Assistance Program (TEA)
- Other employment services
- Addiction and abuse treatment and support
- Mental health counseling and treatment
- Testing for sexually transmitted disease
- SNAP
- Be Well Baby
- Other governmental services
Funding is available through ADH for the call line. ADH is working with the Arkansas Department of Human Services to best make callers aware of services offered by both agencies. ADH services include maternity care in local health units, maternal and child health, home visiting, Be Well Baby (tobacco cessation services for pregnant women), and WIC (supplemental foods for Women, Infants, and Children). DHS services include ARKids, mental health and substance abuse, adoption services, safe haven law, childcare assistance, and SNAP.

Call line: 1-855-ARK-MOMS (275-6667)
healthy.arkansas.gov