

Father Engagement and the Federal Healthy Start Program

**Birth to Three Institute
29 July 2014**

**Makeva M. Rhoden, MPH, CHES
Program Management Officer**

**Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services (DHSPS)
Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB)**



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

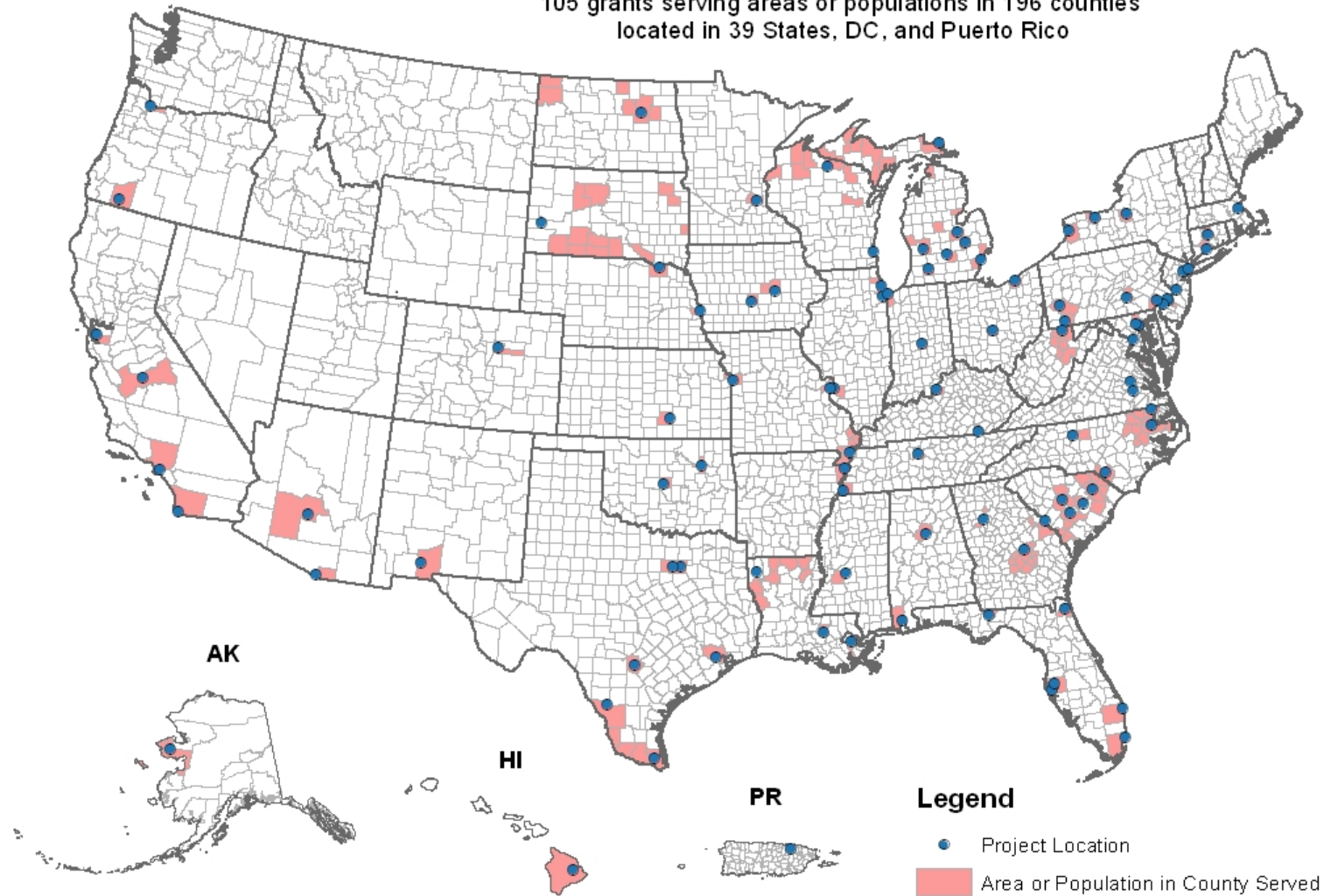
History

- Established in 1991 as a presidential initiative
- Started as a 5-year demonstration project
- Targets communities with high infant mortality rates and other adverse perinatal outcomes
- Initially focused on community innovation and creativity
- Today, HRSA supports 105 grants in 196 counties, in 39 States, DC, Puerto Rico



Federal Healthy Start Projects, 2013

105 grants serving areas or populations in 196 counties located in 39 States, DC, and Puerto Rico



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Core Components

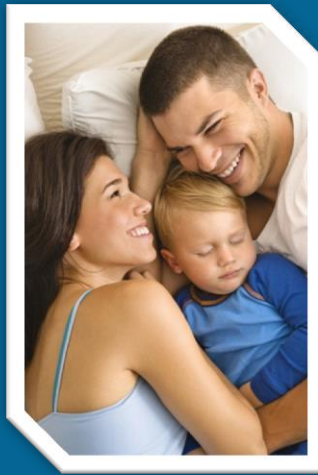
Five Service Components:

- Outreach and participant recruitment
- Health education
- Case management
- Maternal depression screening
- Interconception care services

Four Systems-building components:

- Implementation of a consortium
- Development of local health system action plans
- Development of sustainability measures
- Collaboration and coordination with Title V





What About the fathers?



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Overview of Father Involvement

- For the past 22-years, many projects have structured their programs to incorporate fathers by:
 - Providing health education and direct case management
 - Facilitating male support groups
 - Providing guidance on navigating the judicial system (i.e., child support, custody issues)
 - partnering with community organization to provide support for job readiness
 - Assistance with GED preparation



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Overview of Father Involvement

- Currently, forty-eight (48) Healthy Start projects have or have ever had a fatherhood/male involvement initiative in place (NHSA, 2013).
- These programs have provided both direct health care and enabling services, reaching 3,656 males in 2010.



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Types of Curricula Used

These programs have used the following evidence-based curriculums to engage men in the program:

- National Fatherhood Initiative's 24/7 Dads - focuses on the characteristics men need to be good fathers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- DoctorDad - geared toward first-time or expectant dads and focuses on increasing father knowledge on child health and safety, while increasing fathers' confidence in performing basic parenting skills.
- Wise Guys - teaches young men about healthy relationships and making wise sexual decisions.
- Common Sense Parenting - skill-based parenting program that promotes healthy family relationships



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Why increase Healthy Starts focus on fatherhood?

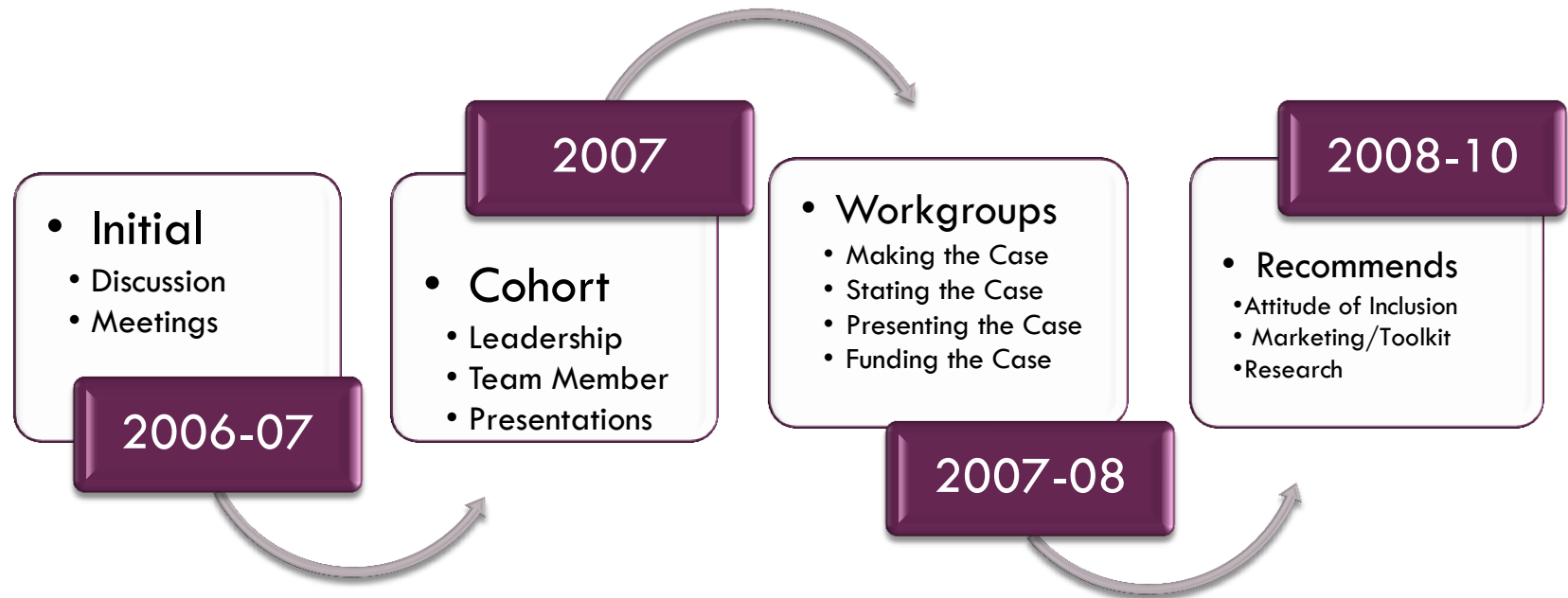
- Research by Alio, Salihu, Kornosky, Richman and Marty (2009) showed that father involvement can affect maternal behavior during pregnancy (i.e., engagement in prenatal care services and reduction of harmful health behaviors such as smoking and alcohol use)
- Other research has also analyzed the effect that involved fathers have on the lives of their children such as reduction in poverty, lowered risk of drug abuse, health and behavioral problems, and acts of child abuse (President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, 2010)



Where are we now with father involvement?



The Evolution Of Male Involvement Where Dads Matter



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

National Healthy Start Association – Where Dads Matter Project

- Developed Male Involvement - Where Dads Matter Initiative
- Conducted multiple surveys with Healthy Start projects to gauge the number of fatherhood programs among grantees
- Conducted qualitative study during spring conference in 2011 to gather ideas from Healthy Start program participants (consumers) and service providers on the definition of male involvement and the role of fathers during pregnancy



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

National Healthy Start Association – Where Dads Matter Project

- Recommendations from the study focused on:
 - Preconception care for men and boys
 - The public health approach to prenatal care
 - Educating stakeholders on the importance of men's involvement in pregnancy and its positive impact on maternal and infant physical and mental health
 -
 - Revising prenatal care programs



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Revisions to the Healthy Start Program at the Federal Level

- Three Levels of Healthy Start funding:
 - Community-based Healthy Start
 - Enhanced Services Healthy Start
 - Leadership and mentoring Healthy Start

Each level includes escalating activities focused on father involvement (i.e., outreach, parenting education, activities and support services to promote resiliency.



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Revisions to the Healthy Start Program at the Federal Level

- The five new Healthy Start Approaches:
 - Improve Women's Health
 - Promote Quality Services
 - **Strengthen Family Resilience: To support the ability of an individual, family, and community to cope with adversity and adapt to challenges or change**
 - Achieve Collective Impact
 - Increase Accountability through Quality Improvement, Performance Monitoring, and Evaluation



THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START PROGRAM

Future Resources

- Supporting Healthy Start Performance Project
- Continued partnership and engagement with other fatherhood/male engagement programs:
 - National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Fatherhood Initiative
 - Text4baby and Dad
 - My Brother's Keeper



Thank you!



For more information contact:
Makeva M. Rhoden

Office: 301-443-9847
Email: mrhoden@hrsa.gov

