

## **Maternity Support Services**

### ***Providing Critical Help for Washington Families and Significant Savings for Washington Taxpayers***

**State funding must be directed to effective prevention and early intervention programs for children and new families. Maternity Support Services (MSS) is a smart investment.** It provides the pathways to better health for vulnerable women and children.

#### ***Maternity Support Services help Washington State mothers have healthy babies***

- Nutritionists, social workers, community health workers and public health nurses work with pregnant women and new mothers to support better birth outcomes and a healthy start in early childhood.
- One in three women giving birth in Washington receives Maternity Support Services. In 2009, MSS served more than 30,000 women and infants in King County alone.
- Maternity Support Services funding was cut by 20 percent in 2009. Further reductions would cut critical support for mothers who have the most needs and the least resources for getting help.

#### ***Maternity Support Services reduce the number of babies at high risk of long-term disabilities due to low birth weight.***

- Maternity Support Services prevent low birth weight births by screening at-risk mothers and supplementing their prenatal care with services to improve birth outcomes.
- Low birth weight babies are more likely to need expensive hospitalizations. The average cost of hospitalization for a low birth weight infant is \$27,500. Without Maternity Support Services, low birth weights that could have been prevented will result in an estimated \$5.3 million in additional hospitalization costs in Washington each year.<sup>i</sup>
- Babies born with low birth weight have higher risks of cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness and other disabilities, resulting in expensive lifelong services.

#### ***Maternity Support Services promote health equity and ensure lower infant mortality rates.***

- Studies indicate that mothers enrolled in Maternity Support Services have an 8% lower risk of having low birth weight babies, a major factor in infant deaths.<sup>ii</sup>
- In communities experiencing a greater share of health disparities, the impact is even more significant: Hispanic mothers in the program experienced 20% fewer low birth weight babies<sup>ii</sup> and African American mothers 50% fewer low birth weight babies.<sup>iii</sup>
- Maternity Support Services also helps pregnant moms stop using drugs, alcohol and tobacco, leading to healthier babies and healthier mothers.

#### ***Maternity Support Services is a sound fiscal investment.***

- By continuing to invest in Maternity Support Services, Washington can avoid expensive hospitalizations and reduce future on-going expenditures for adverse health outcomes.
- Our state will lose millions of federal matching funds if the state's investment in Maternity Support Services is cut.

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<sup>i</sup> Russell RB, Green NS, Steiner CA et al (2007): "Cost of hospitalization for preterm and low birth weight infants in the United States." *Pediatrics* 120 (e1-39), accessed from [www.pediatrics.org](http://www.pediatrics.org), 9/16/2010. Cost figures adjusted from 2001 to 2008 dollars by health care cost inflation table, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [http://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2009/health\\_care/data.htm#chart\\_cpi](http://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2009/health_care/data.htm#chart_cpi)

<sup>ii</sup> "The impact of the First Steps prenatal care program on birth outcomes among women receiving Medicaid in Washington State," Amira et al, *Health Policy*: 92:1 49-54, Sept 2009.

<sup>iii</sup> Laurie Cawthon, Dept. of Social and Health Services, May, 2009.

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**Organizations supporting the continuation of Maternity Support Services**

Children's Alliance  
Community Health Network of Washington  
Community Health Plan of Washington  
Fight Crime, Invest in Kids  
Local Health Jurisdictions including Kitsap County Health District, Public Health-Seattle  
& King County, and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department  
March of Dimes  
Parent Trust  
Planned Parenthood Votes! Washington  
Public Health Roundtable  
Swedish Health Services  
Washington Association of Community and Migrant Health Centers  
Washington Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Washington State Hospital Association  
Washington State Medical Association  
Washington State Nurses Association  
Washington State Obstetrical Association  
Washington State Public Health Association  
WithinReach