

Supporting Healthy Start Performance Project NEWSLETTER



Strengthening Healthy Start to support family health and well-being

TA & Support Center News & Updates

Deadlines:

- Feb 15 HSMED-II Report (CSV or XML) Due
- Feb 15 HSMED CY2023 Data Close-Out

Events:

- Feb 1 Tools for Community Transformation Workshop #6: Sustainability
 - Feb 6 Support, Purpose, Affirmation (SPA) – *HS Consumers only*
 - Feb 7 Healthy Start Enhanced Quarterly Check-in – *HSE grantees only*
 - Feb 8 Tools for Community Transformation NACCHO Office Hours
 - Feb 12 Sustainability Cohort Meeting – *Sustainability cohort members only*
 - Feb 13 Fatherhood Talk Tuesday
 - Feb 14 Evaluation Cohort Meeting – *Evaluation cohort members only*
 - Feb 15 Intro to CAREWare Webinar
 - Feb 22 SIGNAL for Congenital Syphilis
 - Feb 27 Community Action Planning Training
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Support, Purpose, Affirmation (SPA)

The Healthy Start TA & Support Center (TASC) is excited to host the fourth SPA – *Support, Purpose, Affirmation* session, facilitated by our TASC Faculty Planning Committee members, Ms. Amanda Henley, Ms. Dakisha Mitchell, and Mrs. Tamela Milan-Alexander, on **Tuesday, February 6 from 1-2 p.m. ET**.

This SPA session will be for Healthy Start (HS) consumers only. The TASC will use this space to connect with consumers and build trust. Because the SPA is designed specifically for HS consumers to have a voice in the discussions about the future possibilities of a national HS consumer platform, the Healthy Start TASC asks that all HS projects share this invitation with your participants.

They can register for the SPA [here](#).

If you have any questions, please email healthystart@nichq.org.

Tools for Community Transformation Workshop #6: Sustainability

The Healthy Start TASC is excited to host the final session in the Tools for Community Transformation Workshop Series, in partnership with the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO). Workshop #6 will take place on **Thursday, February 1 from 2-2:45 p.m. ET**.

During this workshop, NACCHO staff will introduce their *Understanding and Planning for Sustainability: A Guide for Multi-Sector Community Partnerships Working to Address Social Determinants of Health*. They will discuss how the guide can aid CAN/Consortia sustainability efforts, including informing grantees' Year 5 sustainability plans. **To register for Workshop #6, [please click here](#).**

On **Thursday, February 8 from 2-2:45 pm ET**, NACCHO will host the final office hours session, where participants can ask questions about the tools shared throughout the series. **To register for the office hours, [please click here](#).**

Fatherhood Talk Tuesday

February is Black History Month as well as American Heart Month. This month's Fatherhood Talk Tuesday session will celebrate Black and African American contributions to society, including honoring the triumphs and struggles of African Americans throughout U.S. history. We will also provide resources and information about cardiovascular health that HS staff can share with their HS dads and families.

Join us for this session on **Tuesday, February 13 from 3-4:30 pm ET**. **To register, [please click here!](#)**

Intro to CAREWare Webinar

Please join the TASC for the upcoming *Introduction to CAREWare webinar on Thursday, February 15 from 1-2 pm ET*. During this webinar, we will provide a demonstration of CAREWare and all it has to offer, including:

- Adding and linking client records
- Data collection for mandatory HRSA-MCHB forms
- HSMED-II CSV File
- Exporting Data

To register for this training, [please click here](#).

If you have any questions about the upcoming webinar, or CAREWare in general, please email careware@nichq.org. We look forward to supporting you!

CIGNAL for Congenital Syphilis

The Healthy Start TASC – in partnership with Dr. Divya Mallampati from the University of California San Francisco’s Division of Fetal Medicine and Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences – will host a CIGNAL: Change Ideas to Grow, Nurture, and Lift for Congenital Syphilis webinar for all grantees on **Thursday, February 22 from 2-3:30 pm ET**. CIGNALs aim to enhance and strengthen the capacity of HS grantees to identify and execute change ideas focused on a specific topic (e.g., [Maternal Mortality and Morbidity](#), [Perinatal Mental and Behavioral Health](#), and [Maternal and Child Health in Rural Communities, Hypertension](#), and [Preterm Birth](#)).

This webinar will explore the current public health crisis of congenital syphilis and syphilis in pregnancy and identify relevant change ideas. Over the last two decades, rates of congenital syphilis have risen 10-fold despite recommendations from professional societies and the CDC to routinely test for syphilis in pregnancy. While syphilis is a pressing issue, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care, more broadly, is important for all people of reproductive age. Additionally, while pregnancy and postpartum is often a period of intensive health care utilization, it is also a very vulnerable time for many birthing people. As a result, this CIGNAL webinar will discuss the role of centering reproductive and sexual health care within the context of pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, and postpartum care.

To register for the CIGNAL for Preterm Birth webinar, [please click here](#). If you have any questions, please email healthystart@nichq.org.

During the webinar, we would like to highlight stories from two HS grantees doing the work to provide comprehensive sexual health care. We are hoping these grantees can speak to the following questions:

1. How has your program encouraged early entry into prenatal care and helped birthing people obtain the labs and studies that are necessary?
2. How has your program ensured that both pregnant and non-pregnant

- individuals are getting comprehensive STI testing if desired/if pregnant and follow-up treatment?
3. How has your program engaged partners in STI testing and treatment?
 4. Does your program care for populations at the highest risk of syphilis and other STIs (g., Native/Indigenous populations, those who are justice-involved)?

If you are interested in speaking during this webinar and sharing about your HS project's successful strategies around providing comprehensive sexual health care, please email healthystart@nichq.org by EOD Friday, February 9. We will then be in touch with additional information.

Community Action Planning Training

Please join the TASC for the Community Action Planning training on **Tuesday, February 27 from 3-4:30 pm ET**. This training was designed to assist the Healthy Start Enhanced (HSE) grantees as they solidify their consortia to begin creating an action plan and preparing for implementation. However, it is open to all HSE, Healthy Start, and Catalyst for Infant Health Equity grantees. During the training, Ronda Zakocs PhD, Founder and Principal of Insight for Action, will share the [Community Action Planning Toolkit](#), which was developed by the TASC in partnership with Dr. Zakocs.

To register for the training, [please click here](#).

In Case You Missed it...

Consortia/CAN Development Training

The TASC recently hosted the Consortia/CAN Development training, which aimed to support grantees in refining their consortium's functionality, tapping into available community assets, and engaging a broad network of community partners needed for a vibrant, successful consortium that is equipped to take action and make an impact. To view the recording, please check back [here](#) later this week.

Reproductive Justice Webinar

The TASC, in partnership with RJ Squared, LLC, recently hosted a Reproductive Justice webinar. RJ Squared is a Black, female-run organization, founded by Rebecca Severin and Jasmine Getrouw, with a mission of eliminating the harm caused by the structural determinants of health in historically marginalized communities through the adaptation of the Reproductive Justice Framework in advancing equitable policies and practices. During this webinar, Rebecca and Jasmine provided foundational education on reproductive justice and its impacts nationwide. To view the recording, [please click here](#).

Workshop Series: Tools for Community Transformation

To view the first five workshops in the Tools for Community Transformation Workshop Series, [please click here](#). This series, hosted in partnership the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO), aims to improve HS programs' overall performance, including increasing their Consortium/CAN's capacity around leadership, partnership development, community engagement, and sustainability.



Community Engagement: Now, More Than Ever!

“We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there “is” such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream” speech

The Fierce Urgency of Now

“Vigorous and positive action” is what we are witnessing from HRSA’s Maternal Child Health Bureau (MCHB) in its recent funding of two new initiatives as a response to the infant and maternal mortality crisis: the Catalyst for Infant Health Equity and Heathy Start Enhanced initiatives. These efforts fortify MCHB’s continued investment in Healthy Start communities across the country, which have been engaged in “vigorous and positive action” to address infant and maternal mortality for over 30 years. Why? Because Dr. King’s clarion call for racial and social justice – with the “fierce urgency of now” that resounded in 1963 – echoes and is amplified across the nation today in 2024.

The national infant mortality rate [rose 3% from 2021 to 2022](#), the first year-to-year increase in the rate since 2001 to 2002. This increase signals the *fierce urgency of now*. Our nation continues its struggle to unravel the persistent disparities created by our history plagued with inequalities and injustices, which perpetuates the survival lag among African American (AA) and American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) babies. As we face this struggle, we must harness the collective engagement that was powerfully exemplified over 60 years ago during the Civil Rights Movement.

What is Community Engagement?

[Research shows](#) that when individuals play a meaningful role in the deliberations, discussions, decision-making and/or implementation of projects or programs affecting them, those projects and program achieve a higher level of success. In its simplest terms, community engagement seeks to work collaboratively with the community to achieve long-term, sustainable outcomes, community betterment and empowerment. It often involves [partnerships and coalitions](#) that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices.

McKnight and Kretzmann – co-directors of the [Asset- Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University](#) and authors of the classic community-building guide, *Building Communities From the Inside Out* – argue that too often “experts” undermine

“Communities are never built from the top down or from the outside in.” - As Kretzmann and McKnight

the natural leadership and the sense of connectedness that exist in communities as assets for solving problems. This misguided perspective leads to the traditional “deficit” model when approaching community engagement, which is neither authentic nor impactful. In fact, those approaches have often led to harm. A pathway to authentic community engagement could begin with asking these questions: *“What can community members do best for themselves and each other? What can community members do best if they receive some support from organizations? What can organizations do best for communities that people can’t do for themselves?”* Authentic community engagement creates an opportunity to cultivate trust and help those outside of the community become trustworthy.

Community Engagement & Healthy Start

No one does community engagement like Healthy Start communities. Healthy Start was the first federal program to require grantees to establish a Community Consortia to ensure the initiative was “community-based” and “community-driven,” two important principles embedded in authentic community engagement. As MCHB shared in its application for the 2024-2029 grant cycle, grantees will be required to establish a Community Consortia to implement community action plans to address the SDOH and structural barriers impeding acceleration of closing the gap in birth outcomes. Given *the fierce urgency of now* – driven by the alarming disparities in infant and maternal outcomes – Healthy Start’s community-based, community-driven model is needed more than ever.

This nation has called upon all Healthy Start grantees to engage their respective communities in this vital work, as a response to *the urgency of now*. Thank you for responding to the call! As your Healthy Start TA & Support Center, we are here and ready to support your community engagements efforts. As noted in the beginning of this newsletter, we recently hosted a [Consortia/CAN Development Training](#) and will be hosting a [Community Action Planning Training](#) in February. We have also enlisted a diverse team of subject matter experts to assist you through [individualized TA](#), as needed.

It has been an honor to serve HS communities during this five-year grant cycle, and we look forward to continuing our service to the HS community. We wish you well on your new applications and continued success! Thank you for your tremendous work on behalf of women, children, fathers, and families across this nation.

In greater hope and appreciation,

Kenn L. Harris
Director, NICHQ’s Healthy Start TA & Support Center

Other Resources

Opportunity to Share Maternal Mental Health Experience with USDS/HHS

The U.S. Digital Service (USDS) team is working with HHS’s [Maternal Mental Health Task Force](#) to better understand the maternal mental health journey and improve the maternal mental health care experience in the U.S. As part of this effort, USDS and HHS would like to talk with mothers and birthing people who have experienced pregnancy and birth in the last 2 years and/or are on Medicaid.

What is the goal?

USDS/HHS aims to learn about:

1. Mothers’ experience with mental health screening tools
2. What happens after screening
3. What challenges they faced and support they needed

Who is eligible to participate?

USDS/HHS would like to speak with:

1. Mothers who
 1. Have taken a mental health screening tool within the last two years,
AND
 2. Are mentally and emotionally able to effectively participate in the interview, as judged by the provider or case manager who refers them
2. Providers/support teams who support mothers who use Medicaid and have taken mental health screening tools.

What does participating entail?

Our trauma-informed researchers will conduct 1-hour long remote calls (e.g. Webex or phone) throughout January and February 2024. Trauma-informed researchers will lead the interview and share sample questions ahead of time. They may use anonymized quotes from this session in materials for Congress to educate and advocate for the mental health of mothers. Any quotes they share will not be identified/attributed to any individual.

How do I sign up or share this information with my clients?

Please use [this link to select a time slot](#). Please share this link with any of your Healthy Start clients who might be eligible.

CityMatCH Leadership & MCH Epidemiology Conference Proposal

Submissions

The [2024 CityMatch Conference](#), *Reaching New Heights: Strengthening MNCH Across Generations*, will be held on September 9-11 in Seattle, Washington. CityMatCH is now accepting proposals for abstracts, workshops, facilitated discussion, and symposiums. Suggested topic areas include data use, equity, policy and advocacy, intersectionality, and ongoing MCH issues. **To learn more and submit a proposal, [please click here](#).**



Hosting or attending an exciting event or webinar?

We will use the EPIC Center [Training Calendar](#) to share information about events specifically planned for Healthy Start projects, as well as other relevant webinars, trainings, and other events that are open to the public. If you know of events or trainings that you think other Healthy Start projects should be aware of, please feel free to send information to healthystart@nichq.org.

Have questions? Either respond to this email or contact the sender on healthystart@nichq.org

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