Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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Program Results Report
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The MOMobile Home Visiting Program Goes to Jail and Follows the Babies Home

Improving the health and parenting skills of incarcerated pregnant and postpartum women and their babies

SUMMARY

From July 2006 through December 2010, Maternity Care Coalition (MMC) provided educational and support services to female inmates in Philadelphia's Riverside Correctional Facility who were pregnant or mothers of young children.

Called the MOMobile® at Riverside, the program aimed to help women inmates improve their health and their parenting skills and to stay connected to their children during incarceration. Services continued for up to a year after women re-entered the community.

Key Results

- Some 351 incarcerated women participated in MOMobile prenatal and parenting groups at Riverside from November 2006 through December 2010.
- During the same time period, MOMobile counselors or advocates provided counseling and individual case management services to 348 incarcerated women who were pregnant or had a young child at home.
- MOMobile advocates, who received special training to serve as doulas[1] for pregnant women in prison, were present at 51 births from May 2008 through December 2010.
- A Caregiver Advocate worked with 78 individuals caring for inmates' infants and young children from May 2009 through December 2010.

"I learned everything—how to be a mother, how to love my child, how to be responsible to my children, discipline, learning that there is no way I am coming back."—A Prenatal Parenting Group participant.

[1] A doula provides nonmedical support to women during labor and childbirth.

Key Findings

Internal assessments of the program found:

- Significant increases in participants' knowledge of prenatal and child health and development
- Positive changes in behaviors related to better health for themselves and their children
- Increased access to and use of public social service and health benefits to which the mothers were entitled

Funding

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) provided two grants to Maternity Care Coalition totaling $486,921.

CONTEXT

The number of female inmates in U.S. correctional systems has risen dramatically in recent years, according to Maternity MCC staff.

In Philadelphia alone there were 75 women inmates in 1970 and more than 800 in 2004. Of these 800 female inmates, approximately 86 percent had children and 20 to 40 women were pregnant at any given time, MCC staff reported.

Many incarcerated women lack knowledge regarding prenatal health and wellness, parenting, child development, and positive discipline. Many have multiple and chronic problems, including poverty, inadequate health care, physical or mental disabilities, substance abuse, HIV, behavioral health issues, poor job skills, and language/literacy challenges. Prison staffers are often unable to address these women's complex needs.

MCC's MOMobile home visiting programs have provided door-to-door outreach and access to prenatal care services to vulnerable women since 1987. In 2004, Philadelphia Prison System officials asked MCC to create an onsite program at the women's prison.

RWJF's Interest in This Area

RWJF funded the David Olds' *Nurse-Family Partnership* program from its inception in 1979 with a rural White population in Elmira, N.Y., through a subsequent iteration with an inner-city Black population in Memphis, Tenn., and a third trial in Denver in the 1990s. The program, which uses registered nurses to take preventive health services into the homes of young, low-income pregnant women and first-time mothers, has been shown to have positive effects on the health and lives of babies and mothers. The program has been picked up by states, the federal government, and other nations. To read

more about this home visiting program, see the Program Results Report and the Special Report on David Olds and his program.

THE PROJECT

In 2006, Maternity Care Coalition launched the MOMobile at Riverside, a program of educational and support services for incarcerated women who are pregnant or have children under the age of three.[2] A program manager and two case managers from MCC ran the program.

"I feel as though you can never get enough information. I learned new stuff, especially about birth control."—A Parenting Group participant

The program aimed to help women:

- Improve their knowledge of prenatal health needs and practices
- Gain access to needed prenatal, family planning and well-baby services and monitoring compliance with appointments to receive care
- Increase access to and enrollment in health insurance and needed public benefits
- Reduce unhealthy behaviors, including smoking, substance abuse, and unhealthy eating
- Increase their knowledge of child development, attachment between mother and child, positive discipline skills, health, and safety

RWJF provided a "bridge" grant in 2010[3] to help sustain the program after anticipated funding from municipal, state, and other supporters was reduced or eliminated, due to the impact of the economic recession. MCC later was able to find additional community support to continue the program.

Group Education and Support

MCC started 12 prenatal groups and nine parenting groups at Riverside.

- Topics for the prenatal group, which ran for seven sessions, included fetal development, labor and delivery, preterm labor, health during pregnancy, substance use, HIV, bonding, and infant care. At the request of the inmates, MCC added a session on family planning.
- Topics for the parenting group included bonding; physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development during the first three years; guidance and discipline; immunizations and well-baby care; and health and safety during the first three years.

[2] Grant ID# 58037.

[3] Grant ID# 67332.

At the request of the inmates, MCC added sessions on family planning and potty training.

Case Management

MCC provided case management services during women inmates' incarceration and for one year after release:

- MOMobile counselors provided support and encouragement to pregnant inmates as their pregnancies progressed.
- With inmates who had a young child to return to, counselors focused on child development and parenting skills, i.e., working to enhance the bond between the mother and child and increasing the mother's understanding of her child's development and needs.

  For inmates leaving prison and returning home, counselors provided re-entry services that addressed health care for the woman and her children, public benefits, housing, child care, education, job training, HIV prevention, and mental health.

"I have a 3-year-old son, but I still learned a lot – physically, emotionally, mentally, everything. The doctor in the 'street' doesn't sit down and tell you all that stuff."—A Parenting Group participant

Doula and Labor Support Services

Prior to starting a doula program at Riverside, inmates went through labor and delivery at a hospital with only the support of medical professionals and in the presence of two armed prison guards.

Women were given the choice of being shackled to the bed by either their ankle or their wrist. They remained shackled even after delivery, which restrained their ability to hold or nurse their babies. Shortly after delivery, the women returned to the prison, and the baby was released into the care of someone identified by the mother or into the child welfare system.

When MCC staff became aware of this situation, four MOMobile advocates requested and were granted permission to be trained as doulas and to accompany each woman to the hospital and support her during labor and delivery.

Caregiver Advocates

Caregivers for the children of incarcerated women—grandmothers, fathers, sisters, aunts—are often unprepared to provide care and financial support to children, particularly in the first few months after the mother is sent to prison.

In May 2009, the MOMobile hired a Caregiver Advocate to work with these caregivers for three months—to assist them in enrolling the baby in public benefit programs; to connect families to community-based services; and to provide safe cribs, clothing, and other essential equipment.

Other Funding

The Tuttleman Family Foundation, Carole and F. Otto Haas Fund, Claneil Foundation, First Hospital Foundation, Fourjay Foundation, Jackson V. Hendrick Committee, Lomax Family Foundation, March of Dimes, the coalition's Stork Fund for New Initiatives, and the McLean Contributionship supported the program. See the Appendix for more information on funding partners.

RESULTS

Maternity Care Coalition reported these results to RWJF:

- **Some 351 incarcerated women participated in prenatal groups and parent groups at Riverside from November 2006 through December 2010.**
- **MOMobile counselors provided counseling and individual case management services to 348 of these incarcerated women who were pregnant or had a young child at home.** From November 2006 through December 2010, these case management services built on the work done in the prenatal and new parent groups, and were individualized for each client.
- **Doulas, or birth and labor support coaches, were present at 51 births from May 2008 through December 2010.**
- **The Caregiver Advocate worked with 78 individuals caring for inmates' infants and young children from May 2009 through December 2010.**

Case Vignettes

Two stories illustrate how the MOMobile program helps Riverside inmates:

Jane's Story

Jane was six months pregnant when incarcerated for drug offenses at Riverside Correctional Facility. She attended the MOMobile at Riverside group for pregnant moms and, with one of the MOMobile staff by her side, soon gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

Unlike her first experience as a new mother 11 years before, Jane was committed to raising her son while remaining drug free. As Jane prepared to leave Riverside, MOMobile counselors worked to connect her to an inpatient drug treatment center that would accept children.

While her substance abuse counselors focused on her recovery, MOMobile counselors focused on her re-entry—helping her connect with her older children, getting her a crib and clothing for her new baby, and assuring that she had the benefits, services, and housing she needed to stay out of jail.

Today, Jane is living independently with her children and is clean and sober. She has a legal source of income and is committed to building a healthy life for her family.

Melissa's Story

Melissa was pregnant when she was incarcerated at Riverside in 2009. She was excited about her pregnancy and became an active participant in the MOMobile at Riverside's workshop for expectant moms. In early 2010, Melissa was released into a substance abuse treatment facility and gave birth to a healthy baby boy in March.

With assistance from MOMobile counselors, Melissa and her son remained in treatment together, where Melissa could develop her parenting skills and work on her recovery. Melissa is currently in the final phases of her treatment program. She has overnight and weekend visits with her family and has reconnected with her oldest child.

FINDINGS

MCC reported the following findings from internal assessments of its MOMobile Riverside Program:

- **Access to comprehensive health services and education increased through MOMobile services to incarcerated women at Riverside.**
  - All women entering Riverside received a pregnancy test as part of their admissions process. Pregnant women are automatically referred for prenatal care.
  - The retention rate was 91 percent in Prenatal and New Parent group classes.
- **Participants' knowledge of prenatal and child health and development increased.** Pre- and post-test measures found that participants' knowledge increased 73 percent in prenatal groups and 70 percent in new parent groups.
- **Participants showed positive changes in their behaviors—both while incarcerated and after release.**
  - Among smokers, 50 percent quit and 20 percent reduced their smoking; 69 percent had a smoke-free home after release.
  - Among inmates screened for substance abuse, 86 percent of those referred for treatment enrolled in treatment programs.

- Among inmates who took part in safe sleep education, 95 percent of their babies slept in a safe sleep environment and 91 percent of all babies slept on their backs.
- Among clients screened for bonding, 91 percent demonstrated healthy bonding.

- **Post-incarceration health care improved, with more former inmates obtaining social service and health public benefits.** Among inmates who qualified for public benefits:
  - 84 percent enrolled in Medical Assistance or other forms of health insurance.
  - 89 percent enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program.
  - 100 percent enrolled in Women Infants and Children nutrition program.
  - 90 percent enrolled in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
  - 85 percent received food stamps.
- **MCC reported that recidivism among those who participated in the MOMobile Riverside program from June 2006 through December 2010 was 28 percent—significantly less than the Philadelphia Prison System's reported annual recidivism rate of 58–68%.**

LESSONS LEARNED

1. **Integrating the goals and values of a prison system with a community-based organization is difficult, and the process must recognize the clash between the two cultures.** "The prison system is a culture of control and order with a strictly top-down approach," Project Director Karen Pollack said. "Conversely, the program agency is a community-based organization with a very open structure and a commitment to empowering individuals and communities. … A great deal of time and patience were required in order for both organizations to adjust to this partnership and relationships at all levels and needed to be continuously developed and maintained."

   Pollack noted that the MOMobile at Riverside program ultimately worked because there was a "tremendous amount of support for this program from the upper levels of the prison system" and "unwavering commitment from within Maternity Care Coalition."

AFTERWARD

Recent changes in the Philadelphia prison system have resulted in a drop in inmates, and more pregnant women are being released from Riverside before they give birth. MOMobile continues to provide a full range of services to pregnant women, during and after incarceration, with funding from the Tuttleman Family Foundation, Carole and F. Otto Haas Fund, Claneil Foundation, First Hospital Foundation, and city prison agencies.

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APPENDIX

Other Funders

(Current as of the time of the grant; provided by the grantee organization; not verified by RWJF.)

July 2006–July 2007:
Carole and F. Otto Haas Fund, $25,000
Children's Trust Fund, $15,000
Claneil Foundation, $25,000
First Hospital Foundation, $35,000
Fourjay Foundation, $5,000
Hassel Foundation, $15,000
Independence Foundation, $10,000
Jackson Settlement, $10,000
Lomax Family Foundation, $5,000
March of Dimes, $3,000
McLean Contributionship, $25,000
New Century Trust, $18,000
Tuttleman Family Foundation, $15,000
Women's Way, $14,000

July 2007–June 2008:
Campbell Oxholm Foundation, $5,000
Carole and F. Otto Haas Fund, $25,000
Chace Granting Group, $5,000
Children's Trust Fund, $48,750
Claneil Foundation, $10,000
Dolfinger McMahon, $10,000
First Hospital Foundation, $35,000
Fourjay Foundation, $5,000
Hassel Foundation, $15,000
Independence Foundation, $10,000
Leo and Peggy Pierce Family Foundation, $5,000
Lomax Family Foundation, $5,000
Tuttleman Family Foundation, $15,000
Women's Way, $14,000

July 2008–June 2009:
Campbell Oxholm Foundation, $6,000
Carole and F. Otto Haas Fund, $25,000
Chace Granting Group, $5,000
Children's Trust Fund, $45,000
Claneil Foundation, $10,000
Dolfinger McMahon, $2,000
First Hospital Foundation, $35,000
Fourjay Foundation, $5,000
Hassel Foundation, $15,000
Independence Foundation, $10,000
Leo and Peggy Pierce Family Foundation, $5,000
Lomax Family Foundation, $5,000
Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, $23,000
Tuttleman Family Foundation, $15,000
Women's Way, $10,000

July 2009–June 2010:
Campbell Oxholm Foundation, $5,000
Carole and F. Otto Haas Fund, $25,000
Children's Trust Fund, $22,500
Claneil Foundation, $10,000
First Hospital Foundation, $35,000
Fourjay Foundation, $5,000
Hassel Foundation, $15,000
Leo and Peggy Pierce Family Foundation, $5,000
Lomax Family Foundation, $5,000
Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, $34,000
Tuttleman Family Foundation, $15,000
Women's Way, $8,750

July 2010–June 2011:
Campbell Oxholm Foundation, $5,000
Carole and F. Otto Haas Fund, $50,000
Claneil Foundation, $10,000
Dolfinger McMahon, $2,500
First Hospital Foundation, $35,000
Fourjay Foundation, $5,000
Hassel Foundation, $15,000
Leo and Peggy Pierce Family Foundation, $5,000
Lomax Family Foundation, $5,000
Philadelphia Prison Welfare Fund, $100,000
Tuttleman Family Foundation, $15,000
Women's Way, $8,750

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Current as of date of the report; as provided by the grantee organization; not verified by RWJF; items not available from RWJF.)

Reports

Issue or Policy Briefs

"MOMobile at Riverside Fact Sheet," Maternity Care Coalition, February 2007.

"MOMobile at Riverside Fact Sheet," Maternity Care Coalition, updated April 2010.

Communications or Promotions

Grantee Website

http://maternitycarecoalition.org/families/get-help-now/mcc-services/momobile-at-riverside. Website created to provide information about MOMobile at Riverside, a support program for women in prison who are pregnant or mothers of very young children. Philadelphia. Maternity Care Coalition. 2006.

Education or Toolkits

Curricula

New Parent Workshop Curriculum, Maternity Care Coalition, December 2006.

Prenatal Workshop Curriculum, Maternity Care Coalition, December 2006.