



NIHCM
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NIHCM Foundation Hosts Webinar on MCH Disparities

On October 30, 2006, [NIHCM Foundation](#) hosted a webinar, "Strategies & Challenges to Reduce Disparities and Ensure Culturally Competent Maternal & Child Health Care." Webinar materials, including [presentations](#) and an [archive](#) are now available on our website. **NIHCM Foundation**, in collaboration with Dana Hughes, DrPH of **UCSF's Institute for Health Policy Studies**, is currently preparing an overview paper on children's health disparities. The paper will feature examples of current health plan initiatives aimed at reducing disparities and will be published in January 2007.

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Youth & Substance Abuse: New Research

Researchers at the **University of Illinois (Chicago)** and the **University of Michigan's Bridging the Gap** policy research program investigated the impact of tobacco industry sponsored prevention ads in decreasing teenage smoking. The study, published in the [American Journal of Public Health](#), concluded that: 1) youth targeted prevention ads had no influence on smoking-related beliefs and behaviors of 8th, 10th and 12th graders, and 2) increased exposure to parent-targeted ads among 10th and 12th graders was associated with

lower perceived harm of smoking, stronger approval of smoking, stronger future smoking intentions, and greater likelihood of having smoked in the past 30 days. This was the first investigation of the impact of parent-targeted ads on youth smoking behavior, and was funded by the [National Cancer Institute](#), the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) and the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#).

The **Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY)** at Georgetown University released its latest comprehensive review of [African American youth exposure to alcohol advertising](#) (2003-2004). African American youth continue to be exposed to more alcohol advertising than other racial and ethnic groups. While their consumption is lower than their ethnic counterparts, research suggests that African American youth experience alcohol-related problems at higher rates. Alcohol use is related to the three leading causes of death among African-American youth aged 12 to 20 years: homicide, unintentional injury and suicide. Of particular concern is the growing body of research that suggests earlier exposure to alcohol marketing leads to earlier onset of alcohol consumption, greater likelihood of alcohol-dependence and greater likelihood of other negative consequences of alcohol use such as violence and motor vehicle crashes.

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Culturally Competent Health Care Marketing

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The **Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF)** has partnered with **MTV** and **Black Entertainment Television (BET)** to enhance youth outreach and education on sexual health issues. [Rap-it-Up \(BET\)](#) is a comprehensive media campaign that includes public service advertisements (PSAs), documentaries, entertainment programming, community events and an interactive website. [Think HIV \(MTV\)](#), launched with support from the **National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)**, **iFilm** and **WebMD**, is a multi-platform, interactive online community designed to foster dialogue and active engagement on HIV/AIDS, especially its impact on young people, and provides HIV/AIDS information and resources.

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### **Child & Youth Health: New Resources for Special Populations**

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The **Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs** has developed a [Child and Adolescent Depression and Anxiety Toolkit](#). The toolkit provides online health information and links to external resources and PDFs. Information is categorized as follows: 1) information for families; 2) treatment and referral; 3) medications; 4) resources (for families, youth, professional, multilingual); and 5) additional mental health issues.

The **Chapin Hall Center for Children** at the University of Chicago released a research brief, ["Science Says: Foster Care Youth."](#) The study compares data from a foster youth survey with that from a general youth survey to identify similarities and differences between the two groups. Findings indicate that, compared to the general population of adolescents, foster care youth experience disproportionately high rates of sexual activity, pregnancy, and parenthood. The brief also describes the implications of these findings for research and program development.

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Efforts to Reduce Women's Risk of Cervical Cancer

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Two recent developments will increase access and availability to the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine and reduce women's risk of developing cervical cancer. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** added Merck's vaccine, Gardasil, to the Vaccines for Children (VFC) contract for girls and women aged 9 to 18 years. The [VFC program](#), established in 1994, provides vaccines to children through age 18 who are Medicaid-eligible, uninsured, or Native American. For uninsured or low-income patients 19 years and above, Merck's [patient assistance program](#) provides free Merck vaccines through private physician offices.

### *New Resources on HPV vaccine.*

[MEdSCape](#) offers a continuing education audio/video/powerpoint training session on HPV vaccination that includes information on HPV vaccine clinical trials data, systems incorporation, efficacy, cost-effectiveness, acceptance, and implementation issues.

[Kaiser Family Foundation's HPV Vaccine Module](#) summarizes research and data on HPV and cervical cancer; provides information on public education, financing and privacy; and links to relevant informational resources.

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## Promising Practices in Mental and Behavioral Health

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RAND's [Promising Practices Network \(PPN\)](#) website provides summaries of programs and practices evidenced through research to improve the lives of children, youth, and families.

Three new Behavioral and Mental Health programs were added the PPN:

- [Social Decision Making/Problem Solving program](#). This program helps children aged 5-13 years develop social and decision-making skills, self-esteem, self-control, social-awareness, and skills for coping with stress and emotions. Evaluation of program participants yielded improved socialization and greater emotional and behavioral self-control in stressful situations.
- [Coping Cat program](#). This cognitive-behavioral therapy intervention draws upon cognitive restructuring, simulation, real-life exposure, and relaxation training strategies to teach children and adolescents to recognize anxious feelings and develop appropriate coping strategies. Participants reported improved coping skills and reductions in anxiety, fear, and depression. Parents of participants reported improved behavioral, social, and health outcomes for their children.
- [Reaching Educators, Children, and Parents program](#). A school-based skills training program targeting children who experience both "internalizing" behaviors (withdrawn, anxious, depressed) and "externalizing" behaviors (aggressive, oppositional, impulsive). The program aims to reduce psychological problems and to prevent more serious problems from developing in children who are not receiving formal mental health services. Overall program results demonstrate reductions in both internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

["State Behavioral Health Innovations: Disseminating Promising Practices,"](#) a new report published by the **Commonwealth Fund**, identifies and describes 17 promising practices in state behavioral health service purchasing and quality improvement. The findings are based upon field expert interviews, and fall within six categories: 1) enhancing consumer-centered

care, 2) criminal justice/mental health collaboration, 3) system integration, 4) the use of performance incentives, 5) quality improvement, and 6) other promising practices. The report was compiled in response to the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health and the Institute of Medicine's findings that mental health care delivery in the U.S. "requires radical improvement and reform."

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Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health: New Resources and Research

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**Resources:** The MCH Library released a new edition of Knowledge Path, "[Adolescent Violence Prevention](#)," for use by health professionals, policymakers, educators, community activists, and families. This latest guide, compiled from public health, medical, criminal justice, education, and social services disciplines, provides resources that: 1) measure, document, and monitor adolescent violence, 2) identify risk and protective factors and, 3) report on promising intervention strategies. The guide also includes resources on specific aspects of adolescent violence including bullying, firearms, gangs, media violence, school violence, and violent-crime victimization.

**Research:** "[The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds](#)," a new report published by the **American Academy of Pediatrics**, describes the importance of play to a child's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being. The report also provides guidelines and specific advice for pediatricians to promote changes in children's social and environmental contexts to enhance opportunities for play.

Evaluation of a neonatal intensive care unit program, conducted by researchers at **Arizona State University College of Nursing & Healthcare Innovation**, yielded positive outcomes for both infant and parent participants. [Creating Opportunities for Parent Empowerment \(COPE\)](#) is 4-phase educational intervention program implemented early in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Through each phase parents are provided with information on: 1) the appearance and behavioral characteristics of premature infants, and 2) activities to assist parents in caring for their infants. Two hundred and sixty families participated in the study that resulted in: reduced maternal stress in the NICU, reduced maternal depression and anxiety 2 months following the intervention, increased positive interactions with infants, and stronger beliefs about parental roles. COPE infants had a 3.8 day shorter NICU length of stay and a 3.9-day shorter total hospital stay. Additionally, the program decreased hospital costs by \$5000 per infant. With 480,000 low birth weight premature infants born annually in the U.S., \$2.4 billion could be saved each year if the program were adopted by NICUs nationwide.

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## **Health Plan Activities to Improve Member Preventive Care**

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Horizon Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Jersey launched an [innovative program](#) that uses phone-based, speech-enabled outreach and mailings to increase the rate of eligible women's mammogram and cervical cancer screenings. The telephone call program, developed by Eliza Corporation, uses speech recognition technology and claims history to:

1) identify women who have not had their recommended mammogram or cervical cancer screenings and 2) call and conduct an interactive conversation with women to discuss their plans to receive the screenings. During the call women are provided education and support and can request a transfer to a radiology scheduling line. The call also prompts a personalized follow-up letter to the member that references the initial call and provides information on the importance of screenings. Finally, as an incentive, women who schedule their screenings are given gift cards redeemable at hundreds of retailers around the country. The program recognizes that screenings are often forgotten in the pace of today's women's lives.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) launched a pilot program aimed at decreasing childhood obesity by empowering families. A survey of 1874 BCBSNC parent members revealed a discrepancy on parental perceptions of their children's health: 29% of member children are overweight or at risk of overweight, however 59% of those children's parents thought their children's weights were "about right." The pilot program, set to begin January 1, 2007, aims to: reduce children's computer and TV screen time to less than two hours per day, increase their fruit and vegetable consumption to at least five servings per day, increase their physical activity to 60 minutes or more per day, and to reduce their consumption of sugared beverages. Through the program, BCBSNC will cover children for up to six visits to network nutritionists, phone access to a nurse health coach, and up to four physician visits a year for the evaluation and treatment of obesity. In addition, BCBSNC will provide tools to help families care for children of all ages from toddlers to adolescents. Invited participants will include families in eligible BCBSNC plans with at least one child diagnosed as diabetic or asthmatic and survey participants who indicated a desire for family lifestyle changes. BCBSNC covered families can also request to join the program through the company's Member Health Partnershipssm.

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Alliance for Improving Maternal and Child Health (AIM) Activities

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NIHCM Foundation is part of the **Alliance for Improving Maternal and Child Health (AIM)**, a collaborative comprised of 17 national membership organizations representing decision makers within state and local government, maternal and child health (MCH) professions, foundations, the health insurance industry, and business, as well as advocates for families. As part of this effort, NIHCM occasionally highlights the publications and activities of the other organizations participating in the collaborative.

**Today's Child Communications** and **The National Black Family Promotions Coalition** will be hosting a conference "Family Wellness: Eliminating Disparities & Achieving Equity," from January 12-13, 2007 in Arlington, VA. More information and a registration form can be found at [www.todays-child.com](http://www.todays-child.com).

**Grantmakers in Health** will celebrate its 25th anniversary at their 2007 Annual Meeting on Health Philanthropy in Miami, Florida from February 14-16, 2007. Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee will be the closing plenary speaker. More information and a registration form can be found at [www.gih.org](http://www.gih.org).

The **American Bar Association** launched a new initiative to help youth at risk. The

Commission on Youth at Risk will address a variety of topics such as juvenile "status offenders," "aged out" foster care youth, youth court proceedings, and evidence-based community services. More information can be found at [www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org).

The **Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP)** is hosting their annual meeting on March 3-7, 2007 in Arlington, VA. This year's meeting will highlight the importance of healthy communities for women, children and families. More information and registration materials can be found at <http://www.amchp.org/news/2007/index.php>.

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NIHCM Foundation is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of America's health care system. The Foundation conducts research, policy analysis and educational activities on a range of health care issues. It fosters dialogue between the private health care industry and the public sector to find workable solutions to health system problems. Detailed information about the Foundation's projects and publications is available on our newly designed web site, [www.nihcm.org](http://www.nihcm.org). The Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health Update is produced by NIHCM Foundation under a grant (1G96MC04446) and a cooperative agreement (U45MC07531-01-00) from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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