

## *Home Visiting Services: “A Big Bang for Buck”*

What if there was something we could do to decrease child abuse and neglect, prevent substance use and mental health issues, improve children’s ability to do well in school, and reduce criminal activity and domestic violence? What if that something was as home-grown as building relationships and skills to encourage families to be more self-sufficient and drivers of their own well-being?

Research tells us that there is such a thing and that the health effects can impact generations<sup>1</sup>. It goes by many names, but the important thing to know is that when we provide families who want to do right by their children the coaching and support they need to improve how they interact with their children, handle stress and plan for their futures, we save our community money<sup>1,2</sup>, worry, illness/injury, sadness, and generational trauma.

It is no secret that Valencia County has its share of struggles in these areas: Our low-birthweight percentage is worse than NM and the US; our ratio per 1000 children of substantiated child abuse and neglect is 25.6 and is 53.3% higher than the NM ratio<sup>3</sup>! The statistics for later-in-life indicators tell a similar sad tale and we are all too familiar with the impact of mental health and substance use disorders on our community given that one in five adults is affected<sup>4</sup>.

The Community Wellness Council is keenly aware of our county’s health needs and we urge you to take a closer look at how Family Coaching and Support in its many forms could transform our future together. We could realize higher graduation rates, better tax bases and enjoy the return on an investment in our human capital that has been shown to be at least \$5.70 for every \$1.00 spent<sup>5</sup>! Valencia County has only seen services being delivered to about 3% of families with children zero-3 yrs. in recent years<sup>6</sup> and we believe increasing funding for Home Visiting, Case Management, Family Coaching, and other forms of support greatly increases our chances for success for individuals, families and neighborhoods.

Please contact your representative and let them know that you support Valencia County getting its fair share of state funding for these valuable services. There are a few agencies providing these services currently and if you or someone you know would like to benefit from participating, please call Diana Good at 222-0958.

Thank you for your consideration,

*The Community Wellness Council*; Ginny Adame, President

1. “Home Visiting and Use of Infant Health Care: A Randomized Clinical Trial,” Rand Corporation. Published in *Pediatrics*, v. 139, no. 1: e20161274, Jan. 2017

2. *The Research Case for Home Visiting, ZERO TO THREE*: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, Feb 16, 2014

3. Low birthweight is defined as less than 2,500 grams (about 5 pounds, 8 ounces). The U.S. value is for 2014. Valencia County and NM values are from 2013-2015.

**Data Sources:** Birth Certificate Data, Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics (BVRHS), New Mexico Department of Health. and U.S. Data Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/>

4. Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings, NSDUH Series H-49, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4887. Rockville MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

5. *Investments in Early Childhood*, Legislative Finance Committee, May 11, 2009

6. New Mexico Home Visitation Collaborative: Statewide Capacity as of 11/1/16