



Bright Start Home Visiting Program

The Bright Start Home Visiting Program is an evidenced-based program that offers nurse home visitation services to high-risk families during pregnancy, after delivery, and continuing until the child's third birthday. The program targets high-risk expectant mothers and new parent families, focusing on mothers/families with limited economic and/or social and health resources. The program works with families to enhance their ability to care for itself, and have a healthy baby. Nurse home visitors work with individuals and families to identify strengths and assist them in utilizing and building on these strengths and skills.

The Bright Start home visiting program has been serving families in Sioux Falls and Rapid City since June 2000. In October 2008, a nurse was hired to begin Bright Start Home Visiting services in the community of Pine Ridge.

Clients/families in the Bright Start home visiting program generally have limited/no income, lack other resources, and have many risk factors that put the pregnant mother at a higher risk for not having a positive pregnancy outcome. Clients/families may lack adequate parenting skills and have dysfunctional family relationships, disordered lifestyles, experience domestic abuse, and/or have mental health issues. Thirty percent of mothers in the program are 19 years of age or younger, (age range from 13-39+ years); 87% are unmarried; and 39% have completed less than a 12th grade education. Fifty-five percent of the mothers served are white while 31% American Indian.

Bright Start has helped high-risk mothers and babies served through the program achieve results comparable to the general population with regard to access to early prenatal care, birth weight and gestational age at birth – all factors that impact infant mortality.

- Prenatal Care – On average, Bright Start mothers initiated prenatal care at 8 weeks (2 months) compared to 3 months for all South Dakota births. Data reflects that Bright Start mothers have consistently initiated prenatal care early.
- Birth weight – 91.0% of Bright Start babies weighed more than 2500 grams (5 lbs. 8 ozs.) compared 94.1% for all South Dakota births.
- Gestational Age – 90.5% of Bright Start babies were born at 37 weeks of gestation or greater compared to 91.9% for all South Dakota births and 91.4 % for Medicaid births.

One of the Bright Start Program objectives is to link families to other community resources that provide resources for families. Examples of community resources that families are referred to include transportation, assistance with day care, child birth classes, car seat programs, food, clothing, baby items/supplies, family planning services, literacy services, housing, and mental health counseling.

Bright Start Expansion

The Department of Health received \$635,074 for federal FY10 to expand home visiting services to at-risk communities through the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program grant program. Based on the findings of the required needs assessment, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation area was identified as the area at highest risk in South Dakota.

A Home Visiting Program Manager has been hired to assume management of the current Bright Start Home Visiting Program as well as oversee program implementation of the expansion to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation area.

The Department of Health recently applied for an additional \$1 million in federal FY11 to help expand the Bright Start Home Visiting Program to other high-risk counties.