



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT

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For Immediate Release

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**Rhode Island KIDS COUNT recognizes Senator Jack Reed
for his leadership in securing federal funding for home visiting programs**

***Nurse-Family Partnership Program Aims to Prevent Child Abuse and
Neglect, Improve Child Health and Development and
Help First-Time Parents Succeed***

Providence, RI – For the past two years, Rhode Island has been working to establish the evidence-based Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program in Rhode Island, in order to improve outcomes for multiple-risk, first-time parents and their young children. Families have been enrolling in the program since July and the first babies enrolled in the program were born this month. At a press event today, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT recognized Senator Jack Reed for his leadership in securing \$2 million of federal funding over three years to launch and sustain the Nurse-Family Partnership program in Rhode Island and to conduct a rigorous evaluation.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, stated, “A year ago, funding for evidence-based home visiting was eliminated in the federal budget. With the leadership of Senator Jack Reed, funding was restored for Rhode Island’s Nurse-Family Partnership program and similar programs in 17 states. We thank Senator Reed for his commitment to launching NFP in Rhode Island and for establishing evidence-based home visiting as a core strategy within the national health reform legislation.”

Through the Rhode Island Nurse-Family Partnership Initiative, Rhode Island has become the first state in New England to replicate the Nurse-Family Partnership model. Children’s Friend is the anchor Nurse-Family Partnership site as the initiative is launched and works with the Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office to ensure that program implementation is of the highest quality.

“I commend Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and their partners for their outstanding efforts to advance the interests of our most vulnerable children by supporting young mothers. The Nurse-Family Partnership program has proven outcomes for children and their parents and I was pleased to help ensure that its important and effective mission could continue to be carried out in the state,” said Senator Reed, a member of the Senate Health Committee.

Participants in Rhode Island’s Nurse-Family Partnership program are young, first-time parents and their infants and toddlers. Pregnant women under the

age of 25 who live in Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls and Cranston are eligible to enroll in the Nurse-Family Partnership program. The current capacity of the program is 100 families. David Caprio, President and Chief Executive Officer of Children's Friend, commented, "Through the strong relationship that develops between the nurse and the mother, parents get support and develop skills. Babies and toddlers benefit when their parents get the support and resources they need."

Through NFP, vulnerable high-risk families – such as teen mothers – receive regular home visits from a nurse beginning in pregnancy and continuing until the baby's second birthday. Young mothers learn how to provide responsible and competent care for their child and how to support their baby's health, child development and learning. The mothers also learn how to take care of their own health, develop a positive social support system, continue their education and find work.

Bryant noted, "Evidence-based home visiting programs such as the Nurse-Family Partnership are critical investments to ensure healthy child development and to significantly reduce child abuse and neglect among our youngest children. Senator Reed's leadership made it possible for evidence-based home visiting programs to become one of the core strategies included in national health reform. With funding that will grow over 5 years, the new National Health Reform law will not only help to sustain NFP over the long-term, but will enable Rhode Island and each of the 50 states to establish evidence-based home visiting programs that will improve child development outcomes across our nation."

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT has led the planning process to support the infrastructure development necessary for the widespread adoption and implementation of the Nurse-Family Partnership model in Rhode Island, including working with state and federal policymakers to develop a sustainable financing plan for the program. The goal is to expand NFP services statewide to serve more multiple-risk, first-time parents.

"The Department of Health is committed to evidence-based programs that emphasize prevention and put families on a path to better outcomes. Our agency has been a leader in nurse home visiting and we are pleased to be a partner in the launch of the Nurse-Family Partnership program in Rhode Island," stated Ana Novais, Executive Director of Health, Rhode Island Department of Health.

"The start-up of NFP in Rhode Island represents a real public-private partnership that is the result of the hard work and commitment of providers, advocates and government agencies working together for a common goal that benefits young families and their babies," stated Patricia Martinez, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. The Nurse-Family Partnership program is a state-federal partnership that relies on investments from the Rhode Island Department of Health, the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, and the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. Children's Friend is the first Rhode Island site to implement NFP and provide the nurse home visits. The Bradley Hasbro Children's Research Center at Brown University Medical School will conduct a comprehensive evaluation, including process, outcome and cost-benefit analyses. Martinez continued, "The nurses work with first-time mothers so that they are successful. This evidence-based program has been shown to prevent child abuse and neglect and improve outcomes for children and families."

"The Nurse-Family Partnership is a proven model that gets families off to the right start," said Gary Alexander, Director of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. "It is an

important example of a federal-state partnership that breaks the cycle of poverty, strengthens families and protects children. I applaud Kids Count and their partners for their commitment to assist our families and children.”

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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children’s policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, education, safety and development of Rhode Island’s children.