

**Promote Literacy Development –
Maternal Infant Health Program Feasibility Study**
(FY2017 Appropriation Act - Public Act 268 of 2016)

March 1, 2017

Sec. 1730. (1) The department shall work with the department of education to evaluate the feasibility of including an assessment tool to promote literacy development of pregnant women and new mothers in the maternal infant health program.

(2) By March 1 of the current fiscal year, the department shall provide a report to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on the department budget, the house and senate fiscal agencies, and the state budget office on the findings of the feasibility study on including an assessment tool to promote literacy development of pregnant women and new mothers in the maternal infant health program.



Michigan Department of
Health & Human Services

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The Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP) is an evidence-based program that provides preventive health services to Medicaid and Maternity Outpatient Medical Services beneficiaries. The purpose of the MIHP is to reduce infant morbidity and mortality. The goal of MIHP is to promote healthy pregnancies, positive birth outcomes, and healthy infant growth and development. Services supplement regular prenatal and infant care and assist providers in managing the beneficiary's health and well-being. Program services consist of registered nurse and social work services including: psychosocial and nutritional assessments; professional intervention services; maternal and infant health and nutrition education; coordination of healthcare-related transportation; and coordination of referrals to community services such as literacy support services.

MIHP providers conduct comprehensive assessments to identify health and social determinants of health needs for each beneficiary. Used in conjunction with professional observation, the *Maternal Risk Identifier* and *Infant Risk Identifier* assessment tools assist the MIHP health professional in identifying necessary services for each beneficiary. The current Maternal Risk Identifier assesses multiple domains including: the primary language spoken, vision or hearing difficulties, ability for independent functioning, level of education, and self-perceived reading difficulties. For any concerns or risks identified by the MIHP health professional or the beneficiary, the MIHP health professional will coordinate the referral to the appropriate community resource.

A workgroup of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Michigan Department of Education was convened in 2015. Individuals from the Medical Services Administration, Population Health and Community Services Administration - Maternal Health and Early Childhood, Adolescent Health, the Women Infant and Children's Division, and the Office of Early Childhood Development & Family Education, met to study the feasibility of including an assessment tool to promote literacy.

The workgroup discussed the current assessment measures utilized by MIHP health professionals in relation to literacy of pregnant women and new mothers. It was determined that a literacy assessment of this population is not only feasible, but is currently being conducted through the use of the comprehensive *Maternal Risk Identifier* assessment tool during the initial face-to-face visit with the beneficiary.

During the workgroup discussion in 2015, it was determined elements of the Maternal Risk Identifier met the expectations put forth in the boilerplate. It was also identified that additional consideration should be given to incorporating enhancements into the processes including:

- Revising the existing *Infant Risk Identifier* tool to incorporate a parental literacy component
- Enhancing the existing provider protocols to promote parental support for obtaining literacy goals
- Ensuring all MIHP providers have sufficient education, tools, and awareness of literacy assessments and state and local community resources, such as family literacy programs
- Coordinating with other Michigan evidence-based home visiting programs identifying common goals that promote the literacy development of pregnant women and new mothers

In 2016, MDHHS convened a multi-disciplinary workgroup, led by Michigan State University researchers, to conduct a comprehensive review of the Maternal Risk Identifier tool. Recommendations made by the workgroup for enhancements to the tool, including expanding the assessment of maternal literacy, are currently being incorporated.

In conclusion, the MIHP program recognizes the value of literacy and is committed to supporting pregnant women and new mothers in reaching their personal literacy goals. MIHP currently has resources and tools in place to assess and support literacy. MIHP enhancements of these tools and associated support measures continue to be implemented to ensure that MIHP providers are addressing the literacy needs of beneficiaries.