

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MDCH Partners with Text4baby in Free New Health Service for Michigan Mothers

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LANSING - In an effort to further address the rising infant mortality rate in Michigan, the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) has partnered with text4baby - the first free texting service that provides health information to pregnant women and new moms via text messaging in the U.S.

To help pregnant women and new moms get information about caring for their health and giving their babies the best possible start in life, the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB) launched text4baby. Text4baby is available to pregnant women and new moms from pregnancy through a baby's first year.

Research shows more than 85 percent of Americans own a cell phone and 72 percent of cell users send or receive text messages. The service provides accurate, text-length health information and resources in a format that is personal and timely.

Healthy futures for infants depend largely on the care and information mothers receive before, during and after birth, said Olga Dazzo, Director of the MDCH. The Michigan Department of Community Health is committed to improving infant mortality rates in Michigan, and text4baby is a wonderful service for reaching pregnant and new mothers at this critical stage. According to the HMHB, each year in the U.S. more than 500,000 babies are born prematurely and an estimated 28,000 children die before their first birthday. Michigan's infant mortality rate ranks 37 in the nation.

Women can sign up for the service by texting BABY to 511411 (or BEBE for Spanish). They will receive three free SMS text messages each week timed to their due date or baby's date of birth. These messages focus on a variety of topics critical to maternal and child health, including birth defects prevention, immunization, nutrition, seasonal flu, mental health, oral health, safe sleep, and more. Text4baby messages also connect women to prenatal and infant care services and other resources. For more information or to sign up, visit [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org).

Text4baby is made possible through a broad, public-private partnership that includes government, corporations, academic institutions, professional associations, non-profit organizations, and more. Free messaging services are provided by participating mobile

operators, including Alltel, Assurance Wireless, AT&T, Bluegrass Cellular, Boost Mobile, Cellular South, Cellcom, Centennial Cellular, Cincinnati Bell, Cricket, Metro PCS, nTelos, Nex-Tech Wireless, Sprint Nextel, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, Verizon Wireless, and Virgin Mobile USA.

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