Sustaining Successful Efforts to Increase Home Visiting Referrals
Thornburg Early Childhood Education Grant 2020 Summary Report

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Evidence-based early childhood home visiting (ECHV) is a primary prevention strategy that has shown to be effective in preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (abuse, neglect, family violence, etc.), as well as promoting family stability and economic well-being.\textsuperscript{1,2,3} Strengthened coordination among ECHV programs and medical homes is a recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics to improve pediatric health outcomes.\textsuperscript{4} However, research conducted by the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (UNM PRC) and others has shown that coordination between medical providers and ECHV remains limited.\textsuperscript{5,6} Since 2016 the UNM PRC has conducted research aimed at increasing healthcare provider referrals to ECHV programs in NM through implementation of strategies focused on:

- **Healthcare provider education** about the benefits
- **Messaging** to encourage a culture of universal referrals
- **Engagement** to promote ECHV champions
- **Technology** to incorporate ECHV referrals into electronic medical records

According to data from the NM Children, Youth & Families Department (CYFD), ECHV referrals from multiple sources have increased every year since 2016, including a 161% increase in referrals from healthcare providers in 2019 (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Number of incoming early childhood home visiting referrals by year and source of referral, FY 2016-2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2016</th>
<th>FY 2017</th>
<th>FY 2018</th>
<th>FY 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Provider Referred</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>1146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Referral</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>1251</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other health-related agencies</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other HV agencies</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sources</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>3251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An analysis of CYFD ECHV referral data shows that the increase in healthcare provider referrals to ECHV was 2.6 times greater in FY 2019 than in FY 2018 (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Referrals to home visiting services from healthcare providers and facilities, FY 2016-2019**

![Graph showing referrals to home visiting services from healthcare providers and facilities, FY 2016-2019](image)

### Future Directions

Increasing coordination between ECHV programs and healthcare providers is a recommended strategy for improving pediatric and maternal health outcomes and school readiness. Implementation of multiple systems strategies to increase healthcare provider referrals to early childhood home visiting programs is associated with an increase in referrals in NM. Next steps that may contribute towards continued increases in healthcare provider referrals include:

- Ongoing collaboration among state and local partners to implement a comprehensive ECHV centralized intake and referral system where healthcare providers can send patients with confidence that they will be matched with the ECHV program that is the best fit for them
- Increasing the intensity and number of strategies implemented to increase healthcare provider referrals in the areas of NM with the highest unmet needs