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From Data to Action: Using qualitative research to increase healthcare provider referrals to early childhood home visiting

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BACKGROUND

- Early childhood home visiting (ECHV) is an evidence-based strategy for prevention of numerous adverse child health outcomes
- NM healthcare providers are not referring patients for ECHV services
- In this study we assessed barriers to provider referrals to early childhood home visiting programs and we used the study findings to develop intervention strategies to increase referrals

METHODS

1. Study conducted in Bernalillo County, New Mexico with >7,000 live births/year
2. Formative interviews with 4 program managers, 8 home visitors and 2 community health workers
3. Semi-structured interviews with 17 healthcare providers serving pregnant people and young children (ages 0-5)
4. Qualitative data analysis using NVivo 12

RESULTS

- Healthcare providers were knowledgeable about ECHV as a concept
- Most providers were unaware of ECHV services available and how to refer patients
- Majority felt ECHV should be available to every pregnant woman and young child

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Barriers that prevent healthcare providers from referring patients to home visiting:

- **Lack of knowledge**
- **Time limitations**
- **Stigma**
- **No standard referral process**
- **Concerns about funding**
- **Inadequate skills to promote home visiting**

Recommendations:

- **Educate healthcare providers about early childhood home visiting**
- **Improve messaging**
- **Create a simple referral process**
- **Engage providers as champions**
- **Incorporate prompts in electronic medical records**



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Table 1. Frequency distribution of interviewed healthcare providers by type of provider (N = 17)

Type of Provider	Number (%)
Family practice physician	7 (41%)
Pediatrician	7 (41%)
Nurse midwife	2 (12%)
Obstetrician	1 (6%)

Quotes from Providers

I think as a concept, I'm familiar with it. I think in terms of the practical, like what options are available...I don't know much.
- *Family practice physician*

...helping [providers] learn how to talk about these services in positive, non-threatening ways...
- *Nurse midwife*

... feeling like it's clinician- based profiling... and that you might offend someone by making them feel like they're poorly parenting.
- *Pediatrician*

... just rush through their 70 patients a day and don't have time.
- *Family practice physician*

I really just need it to be simple and standardized...
- *Nurse midwife*

Co-Authors

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