

# Maternal and Child Health

## Expanding Access and Improving Outcomes



Abt Associates is working to improve the health and well-being of women, infants, children and youth and their families. We work in these critical areas—reproductive health, early childhood, community-based healthcare, mental health care, and services for children with special healthcare needs. Our research and analysis expertise supports health policy development and program advancements for these populations as well as the American public.



### Primary Data Collection in Multiple Settings

Abt conducts research in various settings including community-based programs, schools, child care centers, early childhood programs, primary care settings and community health centers. We reduce the burden on respondents and expedite analysis and feedback by tapping into advanced technologies, including computer-aided surveys and Web-based systems.

### Working With Diverse Populations

We work with diverse populations and many racial and ethnic minority groups, including African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. Understanding their language and culture enables us to gather accurate, complete research data on the healthcare needs of these important groups.

### Comprehensive Data Analysis

We analyze a broad range of primary and secondary data, including claims data, Medicare/Medicaid data, vital statistics, national household survey data, and more, to provide our clients with a comprehensive analysis. Using powerful qualitative data analysis software, we can analyze extremely large datasets efficiently and effectively.

### Evaluating Policies and Systems

Knowing that health depends on multiple systems working collaboratively—public health, mental health, early childhood, education, primary care, social service—we evaluate the systems. This begins with the design of flexible, creative evaluations that track outcomes, at both the individual level and community and systems levels of care.

### Reducing Health Disparities

Abt's capabilities in research and analysis cover the broad spectrum of health disparities—from infant mortality to senior health and from racial and ethnic minorities to rural residents and persons living with HIV/AIDS. This expertise is heightened by our cultural sensitivities so that we can meaningfully support health organizations and individual practitioners in serving vulnerable populations.

### Evaluating and Improving Health Outcomes

Enhancing maternal and child health is a complex challenge that requires careful data gathering from diverse populations, expert analysis, and comprehensive evaluation. Only through accurate analysis can we contribute to significant program and policy improvements, and enhanced maternal and child health.

### Our Work in Maternal and Child Health

#### Supporting the Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network to Reduce Infant Mortality

The ultimate goal of this project for HRSA is to reduce infant mortality. To this end, Abt is providing technical assistance to 19 states using public health approaches and quality improvement and innovation networks to facilitate information sharing and development of strategies to affect change. Strategy areas covered include: early elective deliveries, pre-conception and inter-conception care, perinatal regionalization, safe sleep, smoking cessation and social determinants. Abt is also assisting states with the implementation of their strategies.

### **Promoting Knowledge Transfer for Interconception Care**

Abt developed and facilitated a learning collaborative of all Healthy Start program grantees with the goal of improving processes, practices, and systems to improve interconception health status for women. The work performed for the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) helped grantees conduct meetings for peer-to-peer learning experiences, inter-team exchange and didactic learning, and guided them in adopting common performance measures to assess their progress.

### **Evaluating Healthy Start**

Abt conducted the national evaluation of Healthy Start, a program that provides comprehensive, community-based perinatal health services to women, infants, and families in communities with high rates of infant mortality. This work, performed for HRSA's MCHB, was in follow up to a previous national survey of 100 Healthy Start programs and analyses of their performance measures.

### **Assessing a Managed Care System for Children With Special Healthcare Needs**

Abt conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the District of Columbia's Medicaid demonstration waiver program, which addressed the services offered for children with special healthcare needs. Our innovative research design produced an accurate assessment of program enrollment, implementation, and outcomes. The evaluation tapped primary data from focus groups and a telephone survey of more than 1,000 caregivers, as well as secondary data from case records and Medicaid claims data.

### **Evaluating the Effectiveness of Comprehensive Wellness Programs for Young Children**

Project LAUNCH is a program which provides grants to programs for promoting child wellness and healthy development from birth to age eight. To assess its effectiveness, Abt conducted a five-year, cross-site evaluation of the SAMHSA-funded program. For this research, the Abt team developed a program logic model and measures for assessing changes in systems and services. The work also involved providing technical assistance to grantees on local data reporting and evaluation efforts.

### **Contact**

For more information on Abt Associates and our work in Maternal and Child Health, contact:

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