

FAMILY CONNECTS HOME VISITING 2021

HB 5024: For Healthy Oregon Families

In 2019, the Oregon State Legislature passed SB 526 directing the Oregon Health Authority to create a universal, optional home visiting program for all families with infants up to six months old. This program, known as Family Connects, needs an investment of \$5.1 million for the 2021-23 biennium to continue supporting families and setting kids up for a healthy life.

What does Family Connects do?

Having a baby can be a joyful yet stressful event for many people. Family Connects links families who want to participate to a public health nurse. The nurse will visit the family 1-3 times to perform health assessments for the mother and baby and help the family identify and connect with resources they need, usually within 3 weeks of birth.¹ This gives families vital support during a time of need and gives babies a healthy foundation for life.



Why does Oregon need Family Connects?



One in four Oregon women reports pregnancy-related depression, which can put babies at risk for developmental, emotional, and behavioral problems.³ Family Connects can help by supporting both the mother's and the baby's physical and mental well-being.



17% of children in Oregon live at or below the poverty line, and BIPOC children experience even higher levels of poverty.³ Family Connects provides culturally and linguistically appropriate services by linking all participants to community resources such as food benefits, financial assistance, and health care.⁴



In 2016, almost 50% of the children in Oregon who were confirmed to have been abused or neglected were under the age of six.³ Family Connects helps parents develop positive parenting skills and provide a safer home environment.⁴



Poverty, food insecurity, and violence/neglect during childhood (also called Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs) have life-long effects on health.⁵ Family Connects helps parents provide their children with a firm foundation for a healthy life.¹

2021 Legislative Request

The Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials requests your support for **investing \$5.1 million from HB 5024 into the Family Connects universally-offered home visiting program.** This will allow the Oregon Health Authority to continue implementing and expanding the program with Local Public Health Authorities and Tribes around the state, giving all Oregon families support and all Oregon children a chance for a healthy life.



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Background:

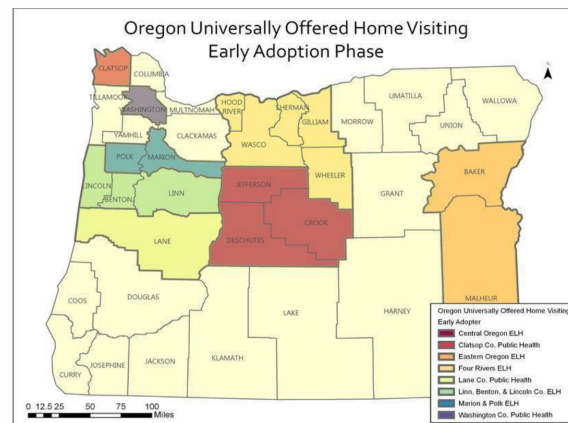
In 2019, the Oregon State Legislature passed SB 526 which directed the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to design, implement, and maintain a nurse-delivered home visiting program for all Oregon families with a new baby. OHA selected Family Connects as Oregon's program, an evidence-based model that meets all criteria from the Department of Health and Human Services Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness.^{1,6}

Implementation:

In 2019, OHA identified Local Public Health Authorities, Tribes, and health partnerships throughout the state to become early adopters.¹ However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused much of the work planned for the 2019-21 biennium to be delayed. The first of the early adopters (Lincoln County) began offering services in October 2020, and the rest will follow in a staggered approach. All services will be offered through telehealth at this time.⁷⁻⁸ With additional funding, OHA can continue rolling out Family Connects to more Oregon families through 2026 with the goal to offer services for the 45,000 births per year across Oregon once it is fully implemented.⁸

The Early Adopter Cohort Communities are led by the following agencies:

- ✓ Clatsop County Public Health
- ✓ Early Learning Hub Linn, Benton, & Lincoln Counties at Linn-Benton College
- ✓ Early Learning Hub of Central Oregon (High Desert ESD)
- ✓ Eastern Oregon Early Learning Hub
- ✓ Four Rivers Early Learning and Parenting Hub
- ✓ Lane County Public Health
- ✓ Marion and Polk Early Learning Hub, Inc.
- ✓ Washington County Public Health Division



Family Connects and Other Home Visiting Programs

Many Local Public Health Authorities already have nurse home visiting programs (such as CaCoon, Babies First!, and Nurse Family Partnership). Family Connects does not replace other home-visiting programs. Instead, it enhances existing programs by expanding free access to all families and contributes to a home visiting service system that connects all families with services and supports of their choice.^{1,9}

References

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