

## No. 2006-23

## AN ACT

## HB 200

Establishing the Ounce of Prevention Program to provide grants to certain entities that provide home visitation and other services to low-income, at-risk expectant first-time mothers and their newborn children and families; and providing for the powers and duties of the Department of Public Welfare.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Ounce of Prevention Program Act.

Section 2. Legislative intent.

It is the intent of the General Assembly to establish the Ounce of Prevention Program to enhance the programs and purposes of existing community-based home visitation and family support services without duplicating existing services.

Section 3. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Department.” The Department of Public Welfare of the Commonwealth.

“Low income.” Two hundred and thirty-five percent of the Federal poverty level.

“Program.” The Ounce of Prevention Program established in section 4.

Section 4. Ounce of Prevention Program.

(a) Establishment.—The Ounce of Prevention Program is established within the department as a grant program for not-for-profit organizations or public entities to provide home visitation services and referral services to low-income, at-risk expectant first-time mothers and their newborn children and families.

(b) Purpose.—The purpose of the program is to strengthen families, promote early childhood growth and development, improve childhood immunization rates and well-child care, improve child health outcomes, improve school readiness, increase family self-sufficiency, increase the involvement of both parents with their children and reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect through the provision of home visits and the referral of families and newborn children to health care and other service providers.

(c) Matching funds.—Grants shall be awarded to applicants that provide matching funds in the amount of 25% of the total program cost. Matching funds may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions.

(d) Term.—Grants shall be awarded for a period of two years.

(e) Eligibility.—A for-profit entity that received funds from the Commonwealth to provide services to first-time, at-risk parents prior to the effective date of this act shall be eligible to receive a grant under this act.

#### Section 5. Coordination of services.

In order to be eligible for a grant under this act, an applicant must integrate and coordinate services provided with related programs and services in the community, including programs that also provide home visitation.

#### Section 6. Application.

(a) Submission.—In order to receive a grant under this act, an applicant must submit an application in a form and manner prescribed by the department.

(b) Requirements.—An application submitted under subsection (a) shall set forth the manner in which the applicant will do the following:

(1) Identify first-time, low-income, at-risk parents and initiate services prenatally or at the birth of their first child.

(2) Provide written notice to the parents that assessments and program participation are voluntary and ensure confidentiality and privacy of families.

(3) Identify family strengths and available family and community resources.

(4) Apply criteria to be used to determine whether to increase or decrease the amount or intensity of services provided.

(5) Apply strategies to encourage the interaction of both parents with the child and to enhance the development of the child, including health, educational development and school readiness.

(6) Utilize agreements with and referrals to health care providers, intervention services and other programs in the community. Health care services shall include immunization, well-child care and any necessary developmental assessments.

(7) Provide qualified personnel, adequate direct supervision of personnel and regular job performance evaluations.

(8) Financially support the operation of the program for the duration of the grant period.

#### Section 7. Powers and duties of department.

The department shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) To administer the program.

(2) To develop a standardized application for the program.

(3) To establish minimum qualifications for program personnel, including:

(i) Required training programs to be completed prior to the initial home visit and to include training in substance abuse, child abuse, domestic violence, drug-exposed infants and parents, infant care, early childhood development, school readiness and parenting.

(ii) Knowledge of other relevant services available in the community and this Commonwealth.

(iii) Certification as a registered nurse or qualified home visitor under 45 CFR § 1304.52(d) (relating to human services management).

(iv) Continuing education requirements.

(4) To approve or deny grant applications for the program in accordance with the following:

(i) Grants shall be awarded to qualified community-based programs with strong community representation and support, local resources and the ability to coordinate with other services.

(ii) Grants shall be awarded based on weighted criteria that include population demographics, incidence of child abuse and neglect and other criteria deemed appropriate by the department.

(iii) The department may rescind a portion of the grant not yet allocated if it determines that the funds are not being properly utilized based upon outcome, expenditure and performance data.

(5) To develop and approve an assessment tool to identify first-time, low-income, at-risk parents and families. The assessment tool shall include the identification of risk factors that lead to child abuse or neglect or other negative outcomes.

(6) To provide measures and procedures to assess the strengths, weaknesses and successes of the services provided by a grant recipient under this act in accordance with section 8. The measures shall include procedures for periodic reporting during the term of the grant.

#### Section 8. Accountability.

(a) Information required.—A grant recipient shall provide the following information to the department upon request:

(1) A report on the number of families and children served and the services provided.

(2) Performance data related to potential drug abuse, improvement in child health, reduction in incidence of child abuse and educational improvement in children who participate in the program.

(3) A plan to monitor the development of each child who received services from the program for a period of not less than ten years.

(4) An accounting of the expenditure of funds from the grant and all funds received for the program from other sources.

(5) Other information deemed appropriate by the department.

(b) Reports.—

(1) Within nine months of the end of the term of a grant, the grant recipient shall provide a report to the department that includes analysis of performance and other data to determine outcomes and any reduction in drug abuse, improvement in health, reduction in the incidence of child abuse or any educational improvement in children who participate in the program when compared to children who do not receive services.

(2) The department shall submit a biennial report to the Governor and to the chairman and minority chairman of the Public Health and Welfare Committee of the Senate and the chairman and minority chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee of the House of Representatives that evaluates the effectiveness and outcomes of the program.

(c) Analysis.—

(1) The department shall review and analyze the information provided under subsections (a) and (b)(1) and research the long-term results of the program in order to determine which programs are the most cost effective and produce the most positive results.

(2) The strategies determined to be the most effective may be required by the department as a condition of receipt of a grant.

#### Section 9. Funding.

Funding for the program shall be limited to funds specifically appropriated to carry out the purposes of this act. The department shall seek Federal matching funds for this program as available.

#### Section 10. Effective date.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

APPROVED—The 12th day of April, A.D. 2006.

EDWARD G. RENDELL