

Text4baby Announces Plans to Reach One Million Moms

Commitment from Johnson & Johnson Enables Growth of Nation's Largest Mobile Health Initiative

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- The National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB) today announced a major expansion of its groundbreaking text4baby program, a free mobile information service offering practical information for improved maternal and infant health. The expansion of the platform and community reach, made possible by a multi-million dollar multi-year commitment from Johnson & Johnson, will help many more new and underserved mothers get access to information that they need to take care of their health and give their babies the best possible start in life. With today's announcement the program is now poised to engage thousands of additional partners in communities at risk and aims to serve one million mothers by 2012.

Women who sign up for the service by texting BABY (or BEBE for Spanish) to 511411 receive free SMS text messages each week, timed to their due date or their baby's date of birth. As part of the program's expansion, partners are exploring the addition of new features, including increased interactivity such as quizzes to reinforce recipients' comprehension as well as more opportunities to invite user feedback in order to best serve subscribers. The U.S. Government is also helping to raise awareness of this free service and better understand the health impact of text4baby. It is strengthening outreach efforts to users of government programs who may benefit from the text4baby service, including through Medicaid, WIC, and federally-supported health clinics and Healthy Start sites. It is also conducting two formal evaluations of text4baby: HRSA is leading a cross-department effort to evaluate the text4baby program, especially for underserved settings that many government programs target, and the Department of Defense is conducting an evaluation to understand the value of text4baby for military families.

"We are extremely excited about the potential for text4baby to help moms take good care of themselves and their babies," said Todd Park, the Chief Technology Officer for the Department of Health and Human Services. "Through text4baby we hope to better understand how cell phones can be used to improve public health generally. We will continue to work with our partners to raise awareness of this free service among women who may otherwise have limited access to health information, and to conduct rigorous evaluations of the health impact of text4baby."

"Text4baby is filling a void in the nation's public health system in communicating with low-income women and new mothers, who have limited access to critical obstetric and pediatric information and care," said Judy Meehan, CEO of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition. "With this significant commitment from Johnson & Johnson, we will be able to see that thousands more women will be able to take advantage of the service and, potentially, get connected to care that will have lifelong consequences."

"Text4baby is making great strides in seeing that every woman has the information she needs to have a healthy pregnancy and get her baby off to a great start," said Brian Perkins, Corporate Vice President Corporate Affairs, Johnson & Johnson. "Johnson & Johnson is proud to be text4baby's founding sponsor. We hope this expanded level of support will help many more partners bring text4baby to hundreds more communities."

The broad partnership and the involvement of CTIA-The Wireless Foundation and numerous mobile carriers has allowed text4baby to reach more than 100,000 subscribers across the country since it launched in February 2010.

The texts provide reminders and vital information about immunizations, nutrition, oral health and child development as well as toll-free numbers for health services.

"CTIA and The Wireless Foundation were pleased to help bring together such a diverse group of stakeholders to help underserved women better access maternal health information. Text4baby would not be possible without the support of our many partners in the wireless industry," said Kim Bassett, Executive Director, The Wireless Foundation.

"Having worked in mobile health for a decade, it is wonderful to see text4baby succeeding at such scale and considering the potential that mobile phones have to help people live healthier lives," said Paul Meyer, Chairman & President, Voxiva, Inc. "Text4baby is tapping into the vast power of mobile to provide an invaluable benefit to moms and is already serving as a model for large scale mobile health information services around the world."

Text4baby has quickly demonstrated that public and private partnerships can have a profound effect. Launched by an unprecedented group of public and private partners, including the White House Office on Science and Technology Policy, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CTIA-The Wireless Association, Voxiva, and founding sponsor Johnson & Johnson, each partner has played a key role in making this free service available to women in need. Text4baby is the largest free national mobile health initiative to date.

About text4baby

Text4baby is made possible through a public-private partnership that includes government, corporations, academic institutions, professional associations, tribal agencies and non-profit organizations. Founding partners include the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, Voxiva, CTIA - The Wireless Foundation, and Grey Healthcare Group (WPP company). Johnson & Johnson is the founding sponsor, and Premier sponsors include WellPoint, Pfizer, and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield. U.S. government partners include the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Defense Military Health System, and the US Department of Agriculture. The mobile health platform is provided by Voxiva, and free messaging services are generously provided by participating wireless service providers. Implementation partners include BabyCenter, Danya International, Syniverse Technologies, Keynote Systems, and The George Washington University. MTV Networks is a media sponsor.

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