



Office of Science and Technology Policy

Free Text4baby Service for Moms and Moms-to-Be is Growing up Fast

Posted by Hillary Chen on May 07, 2010 at 12:59 PM EDT

[Text4baby](#), a free program that provides pregnant women and new moms with information they need to take care of their health and give their babies the best possible start in life, is growing up fast! A public-private partnership that includes the White House, text4baby provides free SMS text messages timed to a pregnant woman's due date or baby's date of birth. Women who sign up for the service by texting BABY (or BEBE for Spanish) to 511411 get health tips, reminders, and information about community resources available to them.

Announced by U.S. Chief Technology Officer Aneesh Chopra on February 4, 2010, text4baby has already delivered more than 1 million free text messages to over 36,000 moms across the country. We are hearing stories about moms making prenatal appointments, using their seatbelts more safely, following safe sleep practices, and making other changes to keep themselves and their babies healthy. In a novel use of the underlying program, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies—the non-profit that runs text4baby—issued an extra message this week to alert moms to the recent [recall of a number of pediatric medicines](#).

One of the most important things that text4baby can do is provide information on how moms and moms-to-be can access additional resources. For example, one of the Spanish messages reads:

Aunque te sientas bien, es importante tener cuidado medico todo el embarazo para mantener sanos a ti y a tu bebe. Llama 800-504-7081 para cuidado. (Even if you feel great, it's important to get medical care through your pregnancy. It helps keep you and your baby healthy. Call 800-504-7081 for care.)

Hotlines, including the National Hispanic Prenatal Helpline (1-800-504-7081) and National Hunger Hotline (1-866-348-6479) are reporting increases in calls linked to text4baby. Top issues that moms ask about are WIC services (which provide Federally supported food assistance), prenatal care services, and free or low-cost cribs.

And communities across the nation are getting into the action! This week, I joined Philadelphia Health Commissioner Dr. Donald Schwarz and other partners to launch an extraordinary text4baby outreach coalition in Philadelphia. The high-energy event at that city's Please Touch Museum—organized by the Maternity Care Coalition and with support from ClearChannel Radio—featured several moms-to-be who shared their experiences with text4baby. One woman spoke through a translator about her appreciation for having the service in Spanish, and how useful it is to have reminders and tips coming directly to her phone because she is busy with two other small children as well.

Pennsylvania already ranks 9th in the nation in terms of the percentage of pregnant women and new moms using text4baby, and officials say they intend to climb further in the rankings by getting the word out through state and local government offices, non-profit organizations, and the media. ([Click here](#) to find out how your state ranks.)

Text4baby is made possible through a broad, public-private partnership that includes government and tribal agencies, corporations, academic institutions, professional associations and non-profit organizations. Founding partners include the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, Johnson & Johnson, Voxiva, the CTIA Wireless Foundation, and WPP. U.S. government partners include the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Department of Health and Human Services. Johnson & Johnson is the Founding Sponsor, and Premier Sponsors include WellPoint, Pfizer and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield. 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, Keynote Systems and The George Washington University.

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National and Philadelphia text4baby partners pose for a picture with pregnant and new moms (and their children) after the Philadelphia Text4baby Launch at the Please Touch Museum. (Photo by Kevin Melfi)