

Looking for a way to reinforce the messages you are sending to moms about how to have a safe and healthy baby? Text4baby provides free messages in a timely fashion that supports the health education work you do at the state and local level – at no cost to you or the user. Here are 8 specific actions steps to help you incorporate text4baby into your existing programs and get women connected with this service.

1 Start by establishing an **intra-agency text4baby work group** to identify channels for text4baby dissemination across the state, county, or city. Invite staff working on multiple issues or in diverse departments (e.g., Title V, smoking cessation, birth defects, teen pregnancy prevention, child safety, WIC, Healthy Start, etc.) Many likely have existing plans in place to get the word out about the services they offer and text4baby is a great way to support and reinforce the work they are already doing.

2 Once you have internal buy-in and a plan within your agency, tap into the relationships your agency has with external organizations and **create a text4baby Task Force**. Think broadly: who are your vendors & sub-contractors? Are there coalitions working on specific maternal child health issues (e.g., Breastfeeding, Prematurity, Infant Mortality, Immunization, etc)? Invite these partners to join your agency for a call or meeting to talk about text4baby's value. Invite HMHB staff to call in and do a presentation on the program. Now that you've identified some key partners, develop a statewide promotional plan for text4baby.

Spotlight: Partners in Connecticut have worked closely with the CT chapters of the March of Dimes and United Way to obtain support for text4baby promotion. Other external partners have included an American Academy of Pediatrics State Chapter (MS), a State Association of Community Health Centers (PA), a Planned Parenthood state chapter (WI), State Perinatal Associations/ Coalitions (IN, WV, PA, NY), and Prevent Child Abuse State Chapters (ND & AZ), among many others.

3 Text4baby includes hotline numbers to connect eligible women to Medicaid. Work with your state's Medicaid agency to insert text4baby information into **Medicaid eligibility and enrollment letters** that are sent to women across the state (don't forget the call to action: text BABY to 511411).

Spotlight: The Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, the Medicaid administrator for the state, includes a few sentences about text4baby and its value, as well as the call to action (text BABY or BEBE to 511411) in every letter that goes out to pregnant women enrolled in their Medicaid program.

4 Partner with the state, county, or local Bureau of Vital Statistics to **include a text4baby flyer in all birth certificate mailings**. Consider seeking out private foundation funds to print the necessary promotional materials – you can customize them with your state's logo. Can't receive private funding? Work with your external Task Force to devise a strategy.



Spotlight: In New York City, every new mom receives an envelope from Vital Statistics with two just things, their child's birth certificate and a flyer about text4baby. With over 129,000 births per year in the 5 boroughs, the opportunity to drive enrollment is great. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene was able to secure funding from the Aetna Foundation to print the buck slips that go with the certificates.

5 Make the "text4baby case" to your State Secretary of Health or Health Commissioner and ask him or her to **send a letter to all local/county health departments** about the program. Have him/her encourage all departments to identify a text4baby point person to join your agency's Task Force.

6 **Ask State legislators to promote text4baby** to their constituents and to the broader legislative body. If your legislators have recently turned over, use this as an opportunity to educate the new elected officials about maternal and child health issues with text4baby as an easy selling point. Many legislators are looking for causes to adopt and share via social media and with their constituents.

Spotlight: Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA) is a big text4baby supporter. She has visited clinics and health departments in three cities within her home district to promote text4baby and speak with media about its value.

7 Employers have a vested interest in the health and well-being of their employees. Enlist the support of your state or community's **two largest employers** (e.g., Wal-Mart) by making the business case for text4baby (employee health and cost reduction). Supply the employers with promotional materials from HMHB that they can share with their employees. To get a connection going, think about existing relationships you may have with employers.

Spotlight: The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services' WIC Program staff reached out to their contacts at Wal-Mart. Due to their existing relationship, Wal-Mart agreed to hang text4baby posters in all the stores in the state as well as in employee break rooms.

8 Text4baby provides an ideal media opportunity for state and local media outlets (radio, TV, and print). Prepare for media interest by identifying a healthcare provider and text4baby user who can speak to the program's value. Use key dates and monthly health observations (e.g., Mother's Day, Infant Mortality Awareness Month in September, SIDS Awareness Month in October, Prematurity Awareness Month in November, and others) as a chance to **pitch a text4baby story to media contacts**.

Have other ideas that are working for your state?
Tell us about them at partners@text4baby.org.

Learn more about the text4baby program at www.text4baby.org

