



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**  
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc  
*Commissioner*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Tuesday, December 7, 2021**

## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES NEW HOME-VISITING SERVICES FOR FIRST-TIME PARENTS AND INFANTS, WITH FOCUS ON EQUITY**

*Home-visiting services include breastfeeding support, safe sleep education, access to a nurse or doula, mental health screenings and connections to social services*

**December 7, 2021** — The Health Department today announced that the New Family Home Visits program is open to first-time families in public housing, who are engaged with child welfare, or who live in neighborhoods with the greatest social burdens. The program offers a range of evidence-based home-visiting services via trained health care workers—from breastfeeding support and creating a safe home, to mental health screenings, to doula services.

"Becoming a new parent can be overwhelming, and many families need help and support to raise healthy and thriving children," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. "The New Family Home Visits program will offer critical support to underserved families and help reduce the persistent inequities in maternal and infant health in our city."

The New Family Home Visits program was initially slated to launch in February 2020, but the rollout was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Last spring, as part of the City's COVID-19 recovery plan, Mayor de Blasio announced \$28.4 million in funding for the program, including a system for intake and referrals and enhanced capacity for community partners.

The program will focus on neighborhoods hardest hit by COVID-19 and with the greatest health and social burdens—for example, overcrowded housing, prevalence of chronic disease, and the number of people experiencing poverty. At full ramp-up, the program will serve first-time parents in the [33 neighborhoods](#) identified by the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity (TRIE); families living in NYCHA in the TRIE neighborhoods; and families citywide who are engaged with ACS. The program is entirely voluntary and free to all families regardless of immigration status or income. The goal is to reach 7,000 new families by June 30, 2022.

Families who enroll in the New Family Home Visits program will receive evidence-based services based on their unique needs. For example, a family who has a two-month-old infant and needs a safe crib and supplies for the baby would be referred to our Newborn Home Visiting Program for a connection to a diaper bank and the non-profit Cribs for Kids for a free portable crib. The program will leverage the City's existing home-visiting initiatives—namely the [Nurse-Family Partnership](#) and the [Newborn Home Visiting Program](#)—and build new connections to community-based organizations and health care providers. The Newborn Home Visiting Program has increased the number of Baby-Friendly designated maternity facilities in New York City from three to 24 over the past seven years. Families participating in Nurse Family

Partnership have been shown to have increase rates in breastfeeding, safe sleep practices, compliance with immunizations as well as screening for developmental delays and depression and anxiety.

Currently, eligible NYCHA families and families who are engaged with ACS can enroll in New Family Home Visits. The program will be phased in the 33 TRIE neighborhoods, starting with the following 11:

- Bedford Stuyvesant
- Brownsville
- Bushwick
- Central Harlem
- Concourse/Highbridge
- East Harlem
- East Tremont
- Hunts Point
- Morrisania
- Mott Haven
- University Heights/Morris Heights

The remaining 22 neighborhoods will be added over the next 3 months. Families who are eligible can call 311 to enroll.

“The New Family Home Visits Program is a win-win for New York City, as it will better connect some of our most vulnerable first-time families to much-needed home-visiting services and support, while promoting healthy childhood development and improving the well-being of our youngest New Yorkers. ACS is delighted to partner with DOHMH on this program and we will continue to make sure New York City’s children and families have access to the tools they need to succeed,” said **David A. Hansell, Commissioner of the NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS)**.

"The comprehensive array of services now available to new mothers and young parents as a result of this expansion will improve public health outcomes and ensure that the next generation of our residents are able to grow up in a safe and stable home environment," said **NYCHA Chair & CEO Greg Russ**. "We applaud the Health Department for bringing this vital program to NYCHA campuses."

"The 'New Family Home Visits' program serves to help reduce the disproportionately high rates of maternal mortality," said **Assemblymember Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn**, Chair of the **New York State Assembly Task Force on Women's Issues**. "Nationally, Black women are 243 percent more likely to die from pregnancy- or childbirth-related causes than women of other races, and the mortality rate for infants born to Black women is also 2.3 times greater than the infant mortality rate for non-Hispanic whites. Unfortunately, I experienced these disparities firsthand when I lost my infant son in 2016, following a preterm labor that also threatened my life. As a national beacon of progress and equity, our City should strive to spare

other people and families of color from such systemic failures in the health care system. I look forward to the near-term rollout of this program in Flatbush, Brooklyn and surrounding areas."

"The New Family Home Visits program represents the sort of community-focused investments we need to be making in order for families throughout the five boroughs to thrive," said **Council Member Carlina Rivera, Chair of the Committee on Hospitals**. "By offering a range of home care – from mental health screenings to doula services – this program will bring critical resources to families who need them most."

"We are enormously grateful for this funding from the NYC DOHMH," said **Carol Odnaha, Director of the VNSNY Nurse-Family Partnership**. "In addition to helping first-time mothers in the Bronx have healthy pregnancies, births and a great start in life, this generous support will make it possible for the VNSNY NFP to provide many more child care items and household necessities to Bronx families in need, including diapers, formula, groceries, breastfeeding items, face masks, infant feeding supplies, clothing and strollers."

The New Family Home Visits program builds on the City's existing home-visiting initiatives, which are offered in partnership with ACS, NYCHA, NYC Health + Hospitals and community-based home visiting programs:

- **The Nurse-Family Partnership**  
The Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is an evidence-based home visiting program that connects first-time expectant parents with trained nurses to promote healthy pregnancy outcomes, child development, and economic self-sufficiency and independence. Pregnant people are eligible if they have never parented before and if they qualify for WIC or Medicaid. NFP serves families in all five boroughs, regardless of age, immigration status or gender identity. Pregnant persons are enrolled before the 29<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy and can remain in the program until the child turns two. Under the New Family Home Visits Program, NFP is expected to offer services to an additional 500 birthing families by June 2022.
- **The Newborn Home Visiting Program**  
Newborn Home Visiting Program (NHVP) provides educational home visits to address breastfeeding, safe homes, and safe sleep and connecting families to social services that are essential to the well-being of mothers, children, and families. Now under the New Family Home Visits program, NHVP will be expanding to include enhanced mental health and chronic disease screening. It will also provide a multi-disciplinary approach supported by nurses, lactation consultants, and social workers and offer referrals to ongoing clinical services for those who might need extra support so children can experience supportive, responsive relationships with caring adults early in life.

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