



## ASSOCIATION OF MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS

Feb. 27, 2014, Washington, DC – Today, the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) Board of Directors President Millie Jones issued the following statement:

“The impressive 43 percent decline in obesity rates among young children reported this week is a major public health breakthrough that should be celebrated and accelerated. The news is especially encouraging because we know the earliest years are when health and nutrition habits are formed, so getting it right from the beginning helps build a foundation for life-long health and avoids the predictable, preventable, and expensive costs of future chronic disease caused by obesity.

We especially commend First Lady Michelle Obama for galvanizing the nation’s attention on these issues through the Let’s Move campaign,” said Jones.

“This success also underscores the importance of sustaining and expanding investments in public health programs that are making a difference such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); the Prevention and Public Health Fund; the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; and the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant.”

The Title V MCH Block Grant, for example, provides states flexible resources to drive needed improvements in state-identified priorities. With Title V support, **Arizona** implemented the [Empower Program](#) – a statewide policy change that prioritized health by discounting child care center licensing fees for centers that adopt evidence-based standards that promote health for young children. It is specifically focused on promoting healthy eating, physical activity and smoke-free environments. Today, the Empower Program reaches more than 200,000 children in licensed early care and education facilities throughout Arizona.

The **Colorado** [early childhood obesity prevention \(ECOP\)](#) initiatives span multiple settings where women and families spend time to address obesity and overweight for infants and children ages zero to five, pregnant women, and women of reproductive age. This includes providing physical activity training for early care and education providers, and providing training and resources to change food service practices and ensure healthier meals in early care and education settings.

Jones continued, “All state MCH programs are also working to increase breastfeeding rates, which are linked to lower obesity rates and other positive outcomes. According to CDC, the percent of babies breastfeeding at six months increased from 35 percent in 2000 to 49 percent in [2010](#). It is critical that we continue to support work that improves hospital, community and

workplace support for breastfeeding mothers and babies in order to build on this progress and achieve even greater cost savings."

AMCHP has several resources that highlight additional state successes and provide ideas and tools to replicate programs and policies. For more information on what state Title V MCH programs are doing, including state snapshots, download the AMCHP Issue Brief on [Promoting Healthy Weight: The Role of Title V](#). A recent issue brief entitled, *State Opportunities and Strategies for Breastfeeding Promotion through the Affordable Care Act* is also available [here](#), with a related and webinar [here](#). Additional AMCHP resources on obesity and overweight are available [here](#).

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The AMCHP mission is to support state maternal and child health programs and provide national leadership on issues affecting women and children. For more information, please contact Director of Programs Lacy Fehrenbach at [lfehrenbach@amchp.org](mailto:lfehrenbach@amchp.org) or Director of Policy Brent Ewig at [bewig@amchp.org](mailto:bewig@amchp.org) or call (202) 775-0436.