



Lewis & Clark
**Public
Health**

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**Presentation to the 2021 Health and Human Services Joint Appropriations Subcommittee
February 11, 2021
Presented by Drenda Niemann, MPA, Health Officer**

Good Morning Mister Chair and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Drenda Niemann, Health Officer for Lewis and Clark Public Health here in Helena.

For many years, we have provided services to pregnant women and families with young children. Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program, home visiting and parenting support services are offered to families most in need. Across Montana, WIC and Home Visiting programs are focused on enhancing health outcomes. Our menu of services include nutrition assessment, education, and food benefits; Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, SafeCare, Asthma Home Visiting, Tobacco Cessation support for pregnant women, breastfeeding support, parenting classes and support groups, and Medicaid targeted case management. Our team of registered nurses, dietitians, and social workers delivered high quality services to thousands children and families in fiscal year 2018.

We are seeing improved outcomes in full-term births, breastfeeding initiation and duration, bonding and attachment, parenting skills, school readiness, managed asthma, and fully immunized children. I'll let this statement from a mom we have served speak for itself.

I quote "After my baby was born, a nurse from the health department called to see how I was doing and offered me a home visit. It had been a few years since my first baby was born and thought it would be nice to get help with breastfeeding. We talked about breastfeeding, but also so much more. The nurse helped me enroll in WIC and Parents as Teachers home visiting program which we did for 3 years. I didn't realize how many things a parent can use support with. Everything from safety, allergies to food, and screening to make sure my baby was growing and learning. I even gained the confidence and courage to start college. Because of the support of WIC and home visiting programs, I am on my way to owning my own home and saving for my children's college." End quote

Historically, you have invested in services that support families and we are incredibly grateful for those funds. We would not be able to provide this level of service without the funding administered through the Early childhood and Family Support Division. Your return on investment is substantial. For every dollar you invest in family support services, you are saving \$7 in health care costs, public assistance, special education, child protective services, and the justice system. Lewis and Clark Public Health and the families we serve appreciate your thoughtful decision regarding ongoing support of these very important services. Thank you.

"To Improve and Protect the Health of all Lewis and Clark County Residents"