

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Illinois competes in national contest to help pregnant women and new mothers**

*Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition aims to reach 3,000 moms throughout the state with text4baby program*

**Chicago, Illinois, May 11, 2010** -- In honor of Mother's Day and National Women's Health Week, Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition announced today its participation in the text4baby State Enrollment Contest, a national competition to enroll pregnant women and new mothers in the text4baby program.

Text4baby, the country's first free, health education program in the form of text messages, provides timely tips and expert advice sent directly to the cell phones of pregnant women and new moms. Pregnant women and new mothers who text "BABY" (or "BEBE" for Spanish) to 511411 receive weekly text messages, timed to their due date or their baby's birth date through the baby's first year. The messages, which have been developed by government and non-profit health experts like the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, and March of Dimes, deal with nutrition, immunization and birth defect prevention, among other topics.

The United States has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the industrialized world. Each year in the U.S. more than 500,000 babies are born prematurely and an estimated 28,000 children die before their first birthday. In response to this national public health crisis, the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB) launched text4baby in partnership with founding sponsor Johnson & Johnson, Voxiva, CTIA-The Wireless Foundation, Grey Healthcare Group (a WPP company), the nation's wireless carriers, and the U.S. government.

In its first year, text4baby has already reached more than 160,000 users thanks to its unprecedented public-partnership. The goal of the text4baby State Enrollment Contest is to reach twice as many users through healthy competition among the states and engagement of the over 500 text4baby Outreach Partners.

The top three states that have enrolled the most users in text4baby between May 10 and October 20, 2011 will be announced at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. The prize for each of the winning states will be a sponsored luncheon/press event for text4baby partners in that state.

“The Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition is pleased to partner with the text4baby initiative to give expectant and new mothers critical information they need so they can take charge of their health and the health of their babies,” said Janine Lewis, Executive Director.

Text4baby is working towards a goal of reaching 1 million mothers by the end of 2012. “The text4baby State Enrollment Contest is a way for States to actively participate in making sure that the millions of pregnant women and new moms across the country get the most important information they need to ensure their child’s healthy development,” said Judy Meehan, CEO of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition.

State Enrollment Contest Sponsors include:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- National WIC Association
- Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP)
- National Healthy Start Association (NHSA)
- March of Dimes
- National Association of County and State Health Officials (NACCHO)
- CityMatCH

These organizations will be promoting the contest to their extensive membership. For more info go to [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org).

### **About text4baby**

Text4baby is made possible through a public-private partnership that includes government, corporations, academic institutions, professional associations, tribal agencies and non-profit organizations. Founding partners include the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, Voxiva, CTIA - The Wireless Foundation, and Grey Healthcare Group (WPP company). Johnson & Johnson is the founding sponsor, and Premier sponsors include WellPoint, Pfizer, and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield. U.S. government partners include the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Defense Military Health System, and the US Department of Agriculture. 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 Technologies, Keynote Systems, and The George Washington University. MTV Networks is a media sponsor.

### **About the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition**

Recognizing that healthy infants, children, mothers and families constitute the basis of our society, IMCHC is dedicated to promoting and improving the health and well-being of women and children in Illinois through advocacy, education, community empowerment and

policy development. The activities of the Coalition address and support the fundamental principles of equity, social justice and fair access to care, which are basic rights of all human beings. The Coalition's main objectives are directed to overcome critical barriers, such as poverty and racism, that prevent achievement of maternal and child wellness. For more information, please visit our website at [www.ilmaternal.org](http://www.ilmaternal.org).

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