



**CITY OF PEABODY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

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For Immediate Release

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The Peabody Health Department is pleased to announce the receipt of a 2017 Catalyst Fund Grant for \$5,000 to train local Public Health Nurses in maternal home visiting. The training is the first step to begin an innovative home visiting program for new mothers called the North Shore Mother Visiting Program (NS MVP). The goal of the pilot program, set to begin in January 2018, is to promote health and support families.

“The early days of having a newborn at home can be an overwhelming time for a family and an isolating time for a mother when a spouse returns to work. It is even more challenging for mothers who are living far away from their extended family. The North Shore Mother Visiting Program builds upon a long tradition of home visiting by Public Health Nurses. Through visiting women in their homes, nurses hope to bring support, care, and community connection,” says Chassea Robinson, Public Health Nurse for the City of Peabody.

Over the past several months, this grant funding supported training of five Public Health Nurses in principles of home visiting, community resources available to support new parents, and the unique medical, social, and emotional needs of new mothers and their babies. Whether a mother is new or experienced, trying to find a parent support group, having trouble affording diapers, in need of encouragement, has questions about nutrition, or just looking for a person to talk with – the NS MVP program can help.

Beginning January 1, new mothers from the communities of Gloucester, Newburyport, Beverly, Peabody, and Hamilton may call their local Health Department to set up a free, one-time visit by a Public Health Nurse. The Public Health Nurse will visit a mother, within 12 weeks of giving birth or adopting a baby, regardless of the mother’s age, insurance, income, or number of children. The visit will last approximately an hour and a half and will take place in the mother’s home or at a mutually agreed upon location. All services provided by the Public Health Nurse will be free and confidential.

During the home visit, the Public Health Nurse will bring each mother a Baby Box filled with baby supplies. Based on the 80-year old Finnish tradition, baby boxes serve as a safe sleep space for infants, similar to a bassinet. Each safe sleep-certified Baby Box will also include a mattress, a mattress protector, and a fitted sheet, as well as other baby supplies like wipes, diapers, and a onesie. As part of the Peabody Institute Library’s Talk, Read, Sing early literacy campaign, Peabody residents will also receive literacy tips and advice, along with a book for mothers and babies to enjoy together.

The NS MVP is funded in part by a grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. Created in 2001, the mission of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation is to expand access to health care in Massachusetts through grantmaking and policy initiatives.

For more information about the program, please contact Chassea Robinson, Public Health Nurse at the Peabody Health Department (978) 538-5931. To sign up for a home visit, contact your community’s local Health Department.