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NFP Has Long-Lasting Effect on Female Juvenile Incarceration Rates, Study Says

DENVER, CO (Jan. 5, 2010) — A new, peer-reviewed study finds that the Nurse-Family Partnership public health program can help keep teenage girls out of jail close to two decades after their mothers enrolled in NFP. The paper appears in the Jan. 2010 issue of *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, a *JAMA/Archives* journal.

Lead author John Eckenrode, Ph.D. of Cornell University and colleagues found that girls whose mothers took part in the Nurse-Family Partnership program had fewer arrests and convictions by age 19 than female control subjects. Study subjects were mothers and children from the first randomized, controlled trial of Nurse-Family Partnership in Elmira, N.Y., in the 1970s.

“This is an exemplary study,” says J. David Hawkins, Ph.D. of the University of Washington’s Social Development Research Group in an accompanying editorial. “There is now clear evidence from this and other long-term follow-up studies that well-conceived and well-implemented preventive interventions focused on reducing shared risks for diverse problems can have wide-ranging effects... that endure over many years and across generations.”

Past peer-reviewed research published in *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association* found significant decreases in arrests and convictions by age 15 among both boys and girls whose parents were NFP clients. However, this new study did not find statistically significant arrest/conviction differences at age 19 between boys in NFP and the control group. “As previously reported, there were greater effects on earlier adolescent antisocial behaviors among both genders that are directly associated with the program’s wide-ranging health and social benefits. We expect the greatest effects to occur in earlier adolescence. Even so, the fact that we didn’t see similar effects for males, as we did with females, is disappointing,” says David Olds, Ph.D., who created the NFP program in the 1970s and was co-author on this paper. Olds is a professor of pediatrics and director of the Prevention Research Center for Family and Child Health at University of Colorado Denver.

“This and other evaluations of early intervention programs strongly suggest that a modest investment in the lives of families can have enormous payoff,” says Eckenrode. “It will be important to replicate this analysis in the more recent trials conducted by David Olds and his team in Memphis and Denver—communities very different than Elmira.”

Olds and his team continue longitudinal studies on the effects of Nurse-Family Partnership on the families in the Elmira trial, as well as those who participated in the Memphis and Denver trials. The level of evidence from these three randomized, controlled trials and follow-up studies are unsurpassed in the home visitation field.

Citation: *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.* 2010;164[1]:9-15. Available for download at www.jamamedia.org.

About Nurse-Family Partnership

The Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office (www.nursefamilypartnership.org) is committed to producing enduring improvements in the health and well being of low-income, first-time parents and their children by helping communities implement and sustain an evidence-based program of home visiting by registered nurses. Nurse-Family Partnership is the most rigorously tested program of its kind.

Randomized, controlled trials conducted over 30 years demonstrate multi-generational outcomes that benefit society economically and reduce long-term social service expenditures. Nurse-Family Partnership is headquartered in Denver, Colorado.

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