



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 29, 2011

Contact: Tom Waldron
410-962-5707

**B'more for Healthy Babies Campaign Receives Two Grants
to Improve Maternal and Child Health in Baltimore City**
*Grants totaling \$2.2 million will fund home visiting and weight loss programs
for pregnant and postpartum mothers and families*

BALTIMORE – Pregnant women, new parents and newborn babies in Baltimore City will benefit from two new grants totaling more than \$2.2 million awarded to the citywide B'more for Healthy Babies campaign.

The campaign is receiving \$1.5 million over five years from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health to fund the B'more Fit for Healthy Babies program.

B'more Fit is working to reduce the risks that obese women face during pregnancy and delivery and to improve birth outcomes for their children. The program, which uses the Weight Watchers model, was successfully piloted in the Upton/Druid Heights neighborhood over the past year.

With support from the new grant, B'more Fit will work with 1,400 obese women of childbearing age to overcome the barriers that they face in losing weight, including access to healthy food and safe places to exercise, along with support and education.

A second \$702,000 federal grant, delivered through the state of Maryland, will strengthen home-visiting programs to assist pregnant women and postpartum mothers during the first year of their child's life. Home visitors – both nurses and paraprofessionals – provide physical and mental health assessments and connect women to important services and support.

Home visiting programs enroll pregnant women and work to prevent poor birth outcomes, and focus on positive parenting, improving child health and development and preventing child abuse and neglect. The new grant funding will support the transition of existing home visiting programs to evidence – based models, including Nurse Family Partnership (for first time mothers) and Healthy Families America. The funding will be used to train workers and for evaluate evidence-based programs city-wide.

“The B'more for Healthy Babies campaign is grateful for the national and state support of our programs,” said Kevin Keegan, CEO of the Family League of Baltimore City, Inc., which is administering the grants on behalf of the B'more for Healthy Babies campaign. “This funding will allow us and our partners to do a better job of serving low-income

women and families, which is critically important to our community's overall health."

The B'more Fit program was one of 10 programs selected for federal funding from an initial field of 137 proposals. The program is part of the B'more for Healthy Babies campaign, a major citywide initiative to reduce infant mortality and improve maternal health, which is being administered jointly by the Family League and the Baltimore City Health Department. The campaign includes outreach focused on fathers to help women maintain healthy lifestyles.

The Baltimore City Health Department partners with the Family League and Baltimore HealthCare Access to support Baltimore City home-visiting programs.

"We are pleased to work with the Family League and our other key partners on these interventions that are making Baltimore a safe and healthy place for children and families," said Oxiris Barbot, M.D., Commissioner of Health for Baltimore City. "These home-visiting and maternal health programs serve a vital role, and these new grants will allow us to give children a healthier start in life and hope for a bright future."

For the B'more Fit program, Family League and the Baltimore City Health Department are partnering with Michele's Haven, Jewel House, Weight Watchers, Brick Bodies, Y of Central Maryland, Priority Partners, Baltimore City Department of Parks and Recreation, Baltimore Medical Systems, Baltimore Interfaith Coalition, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, Park Heights Community Health Alliance, B'more Fit, Baltimore City Planned Parenthood, What to Expect Foundation, WIC, Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, Mercy Medical Center and Save-A-Lot.

###