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**Contact:**  
**Carrie Field**  
**(231) 347-5326**  
**c.field@nwhealth.org**



**HEALTH**  
**DEPARTMENT**  
*of Northwest Michigan*

### **Health Department Home Visiting Programs Achieve National Accreditation**

Charlevoix - This winter, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan achieved national accreditation for two home visiting programs supporting families with babies and young children. Independent accreditation of these programs signals the high quality of the health department's home visiting services and staff.

Achieving accreditation is difficult. Using stringent evaluation criteria, independent evaluators conduct site visits, interviews of staff, documentation reviews, and direct observation of program operations.

Amanda Thompson, director of family health services at the health department, says this thorough outside oversight is important because it ensures these vital programs are serving Northwest Michigan families with the highest quality of services. "Healthy moms and healthy babies are important for our entire community to thrive. We are privileged to be able to help reach those goals through these home visiting programs," said Thompson.

The Maternal Infant Health Program provides home visiting services for pregnant mothers and infants with Medicaid. "The Maternal Infant Health Program is an evidence based program that provides better birth outcomes and healthier babies. Our staff works really hard to provide excellent services to pregnant mothers and their families," said Thompson.

The other recently accredited program, Healthy Families Northern Michigan (HFNM), is a voluntary, non-income based home visiting program. "The vision of HFNM is that all children receive nurturing care from their family essential to leading a healthy and productive life," said Tricia Drenth, a family health supervisor for the health department. "We are fortunate enough to be able to work with local families, in a way that is truly family-led and focuses on each families' individual strengths. We work to build upon these strengths over time, walking alongside families on their parenting journeys, providing support, education, and resources along the way."

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties.

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