

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Rick Haverkate
906-632-6896 x 134
906-635-4212
RickHaverkate@itcmi.org

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The Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, Inc. Awarded \$4.5 million over 5 Years

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow Announces Funding to Support Disadvantaged Pregnant Women and Families, Reduce Infant Mortality

June 4, 2009 – Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan -- The Inter-Tribal Council (ITC) of Michigan, in Sault Sainte Marie, MI, will receive \$4.5 million over the next five years through the Healthy Start program. Administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Start is a nationwide program that provides assistance to low-income and disadvantaged pregnant women and their families. Services include outreach, home visitation, case management, health education, perinatal depression screening, interconceptional care, and other approaches to ensure a healthy pregnancy and a healthy birth.

“I am thankful that the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan (ITCMI) has been selected to receive this funding,” said U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow. “Healthy Start is exactly the type of community-based prevention program that helps save lives, reduce costs, and provide quality care to the mothers and families who need it the most.”

Rick Haverkate, Director of the ITC’s Healthy Start Project, stated: “Senator Stabenow has been a true champion for our program. This funding will allow Healthy Start to continue providing community-based services to improve the health of mothers and babies.” Mrs. Sharron Teeple, Executive Director at the ITC of Michigan said, “The majority of these funds are subcontracted out to six tribal and two urban American Indian communities around the state of Michigan, including Detroit which has been hit very hard by the recent economic hardship. “These subcontracts,” Mrs. Teeple added, “allow for local control of the program.”

The maternal child health program at the ITC of Michigan is one of 100 Healthy Start sites across the country specifically focused on reducing infant mortality, reducing the incidence of low birthweight babies, and eliminating racial disparities in perinatal outcomes. An area is eligible for Healthy Start if it has an infant mortality rate 1.5 times the national average.

For additional information, please contact Rick Haverkate at (906) 632-6896.

The federal Healthy Start Initiative receives \$100 million in funding from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Health Resources and Services Administration. Established in 1991, Healthy Start is comprised of approximately 100 community-based programs that respond to the medical, social, cultural and social service needs of women and their infants. The Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan is a member of the National Healthy Start Association (NHSA). For more information, go to <http://www.itcmi.org/services/child-and-family-services/healthy-start> The NHSA supports the expansion of efforts that are rooted in the community and actively involve community members in their design and implementation. For information, visit www.healthystartassoc.org, or contact the NHSA at 202-296-2195.

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