

HRSA/MCHB 2007 FEDERAL/STATE PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Building Blocks for Promising Practice Models

October 14 - 17, 2007

The State Early Child Comprehensive Systems

Initiative (ECCS) as an Incubator for Best Practices

BERRY MOON WATSON: If I close, you pick me up. Okay. So that's Palau Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems. I'm going to just do an overview of the program and also some of the key strategies that we undertook that may fit into kind of an evidenced-based or Best Practice process. And I'm supposed to let you know also that my boss offered his greetings to you and welcome you to this presentation, Dr. Kuartei. That's our vision and mission statement. And the mission statement is that the--that we, the program, must partner with families and communities in order for it to be effective in ensuring success of the children.

And we chose this logo. This is a Palauan mythology, and every Palauan women and men--if you don't know about this then you're not a good Palauan. And it talks about the pre-pregnancy planning, the birthing process, the caring during pregnancy, post pregnancy, carrying of the mom and the child and family, and that's the reason why we chose it to be the logo of the Palau ECCS Program. We do a little bit of, kind of, a description of what these--there's that picture up there of a spider reflecting the father in this cycle or process and cycle, the mother and the children or child. And the ECCS model as we see it fits into

the context of this mythology very perfectly, and that it is the supportive system that brings health and wellness to family in order to prepare the child for early entry to school. So there it is. It's--it talks about--the mythology talks about a demigod that travels from place to place in Palau. As Palauans were losing the concept of natural child birthing, he comes along and changes this back so that instead of doing caesarian section to get the baby out that we go back to the natural birthing process. And it talks about the preparation, the pregnancy, which ECCS is strong in its principles. We also have a lot of external and regional and local requirements of why we should make--why we should go ahead and adopt changes. We see also the similar health pattern in children that you see in this country. We see the first monition of ours. The health pattern is changing. We see very high obesity in children, substance use and abuse. So there's still a lot of international and regional and local regulations and mandates, and why Palau should make a change and make some effective change that can have a longer effect on the health of its people.

So you see the Title V mandates. We have a lot of these international U.N. mandates that's really kind of being pushed on us to change or to implement early childhood preparation in the home and school (inaudible). And we also have local plans. Education master plans is that Palau are to begin providing early childhood education and services for each children. The new public health strategic plan also requires us to begin thinking about that as the compact of re-association comes to fruition in 2009. A lot of our funding will be cut, and also

who's--who's going to look into the implementation of all of these, and who ought to be responsible for it.

And so we're thinking that the availability of funding from ECCS gave us an opportunity to work collaboratively and work across agencies, not just within the health department but in education, in the faith-based organization, in NGO's, other NGO's to bring us together to see how--so what are we going to do about these things. And we thought also that the strategies that comes out of this discussion must be the best of fit for Palau. And we cannot have systems that are sophisticated and expensive as you do here. And so we needed to see how everybody can put their effort into building a system that is manageable and can be supported by us. Any questions?

So in order for us to get people to work together with the health department, we have to have a memorandum of understanding or agreement. And in the memorandum of agreement, we also stated what we can do across agencies to--in terms of resource sharing and how are materials to be developed, because we have a lot of--for example, we have--we've developed materials--updated our materials for prenatal care and well-baby services. The materials now are more in-line with the cultural context of Palau, and not so much just the stuff that we get off the Internet and give to parents. We take it down and we, not necessarily translate it, but put it into a context of language that's more appropriate for our people and our mothers or clients.

We also do a lot of training. We take the materials, for example, we also have a Mental Health 101 curriculum that we developed. And that curriculum is being used to train early child care worker or early child care workers, early education teachers, like teachers in the first, second grade. And we've gone over the country training teachers in mental health, depression, early signs of depression, and how to work with other partners in making sure that services are access for families and their children. And also, our members--the members of our team are the teachers, the health workers that we have on the Early Childhood Committee are our local experts. They are the local trainers, and they are the local educators in the community. We conduct trainings amongst ourselves on issues, and they go back to the community as trainers and educators in their community or in their agencies.