

ISSUE BRIEF:

SUPPORTING AND EDUCATING EXPECTANT FAMILIES

Tania Bailey

Family Connects Nurse, Linn County

Tania shares the importance of promoting family well-being during pregnancy and postpartum, particularly for non-English-speaking families in underserved rural areas.



INTRODUCTION

Promoting family well-being is crucial for building healthy communities, yet during pregnancy and postpartum, many families, particularly in underserved areas, face significant challenges. Mental health support is often overlooked, especially for non-English-speaking families in rural regions. As a maternal/child health nurse and Spanish-speaking healthcare professional, I've witnessed the disparities in mental health services for non-English speakers. My career is dedicated to supporting expectant and new families, particularly within the Hispanic community, through education, health services, and advocacy.



2 MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCESS

Supporting Oregon families during vulnerable times goes beyond physical health; mental health care must be integrated to foster emotionally connected parents and children. In rural Oregon, I've seen the stark mental health disparities in non-English speaking families, often leading to untreated postpartum depression, anxiety, and stress. This impacts both parents and infants. My work highlights the importance of providing culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services. To address this, I am pursuing a Master of Science in Nursing to become a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, aiming to expand Spanish-language mental health care access.

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CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF MATERNAL/CHILD HEALTH SUPPORT

As a Family Connects Nurse with Linn County, I work with parents preparing for childbirth and those navigating early parenthood. Many of these families, especially non-English speakers, face barriers to accessing quality healthcare, mental health services, and culturally sensitive support. Programs like Family Connects, Babies First, and CaCoon are essential in bridging these gaps, offering holistic care from prenatal education to postpartum support. Despite these efforts, rural areas still struggle with language barriers, cultural differences, and a shortage of healthcare professionals, making it harder for families to receive the care they need.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH: ORIMHA AND COMMUNITY-BASED MODELS

As a member of the Oregon Infant Mental Health Association (ORIMHA) board since 2021, I have witnessed the vital work of early childhood mental health professionals in addressing key challenges. ORIMHA's mission to promote emotional well-being for infants and families aligns with my passion for equity and inclusion. ORIMHA recognizes that healthy child development starts long before families leave the hospital and requires ongoing support. Their focus on building a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce, including traditional health and birth workers, ensures families receive inclusive, culturally appropriate mental health care.



CONCLUSION: BUILDING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

The work of supporting and educating expectant families is not just about preparing them for childbirth; it's about laying the foundation for lifelong health and emotional well-being. As a Doula, Childbirth Educator, and Maternal/Child Public Health Nurse, I have witnessed the power of early intervention and the difference that culturally sensitive care can make in the lives of families. ORIMHA's efforts to include diverse professionals and address mental health needs in early childhood are critical steps toward creating a healthier and more connected Oregon. It is through continued support, collaboration, and advocacy that we can ensure that all families, regardless of language or background, have the tools they need to thrive.

RESOURCES:

1. **Family Connects Oregon**
2. **Babies First!**
3. **CaCoon (CAreCOOrdination)**

EXPERT BACKGROUND

Tania Bailey earned her Bachelors of Science degree in Nursing from the Oregon Health and Sciences University in 2018 and has been working as a Public Health Nurse ever since. Her first years in nursing were spent as a Charge Nurse Supervisor at an FQHC in Salem, Oregon, where she had the privilege of collaborating with other health-care professionals to offer high quality, compassionate care to traditionally underserved patient populations. Her previous degree in Early Childhood education, as well as her experience as a Doula and Childbirth Educator, eventually drew her to Linn County where she engages the perinatal community as a Nurse Home Visitor and Case Manager.

