Community Perception of Home Visitation

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression."

The origin of this quote has been attributed to multiple people, including playwright and novelist Oscar Wilde, Mark Twain, and fellow Oklahoman Will Rogers. Regardless of its origin, its simple wisdom has great value. First impressions are important in many aspects of life...including home visitation programs. In order for homevisitation programs to be successful in engaging families, they need to make a good first impression.

Home Visitation programs provide services and support for families with young children in the convenience of their home.

Engaging families is key to success

Improving and Testing of Marketing Home Visitation Programs is one of the goals of the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home-Visitation (MIECHV) external evaluation. As of October 2014, 1371 caregivers of young children who would qualify for at least one home visitation programs in Oklahoma have completed the community survey. During these surveys the caregiver was asked about their initial reactions to three terms:

- 1. "parentPro Program"
- 2. "Home Visitation Program"
- 3. "Home-Based Parenting Program"

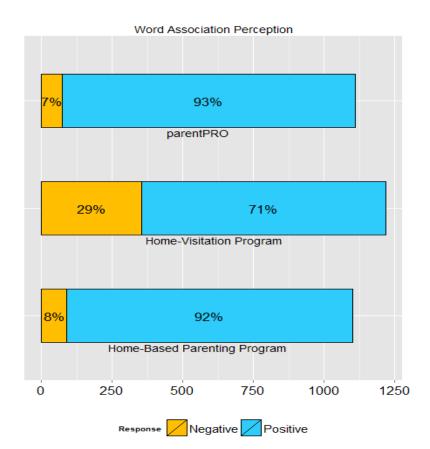
Many potential clients reacted to "Home-Visitation Program" negatively.

29% of participants had a **NEGATIVE** perception of "Home-Visitation Program".

93% and 92%, respectively, had **POSITIVE** perceptions of "parentPRO Program" and "Home-Based Parenting Program".

Caregivers were also asked to write down the <u>first</u> word that came to their mind, a first impression, and then rate if that thought was a negative or positive.

Word clouds are graphical representations of the frequency of word usage. The word cloud pictured represents the negative thoughts that came to the caregiver's mind when reading the phrase "Home-Visitation Program".



Word Cloud for "Home Visitation"



These negative perceptions of home-visitation appear to stem from associating the phrase with "dhs", "supervised", "wrong", "bad", "abuse", etc.

Of the few respondents already enrolled in home visitation programs, most heard learned about it from family/friends (97%), health providers (60%), and/or advertisements (59%).

Among those who were not enrolled, a large majority of the parents reported intentions for enrolling in a home based parenting program after learning about the program using parentPRO marketing materials (63% Planning stage; 1% Action stage).

Other Research Echos Findings in Oklahoma

Public Opinion Strategies and The Mellman Group conducted an internet survey of 802 adults in January 2014. The quote below is a result of four focus groups held in suburban Dallas, TX and suburban Detroit, MI.

The respondents scored other potential names for home-visitation programs. The mean scores are listed here:

Family Support: 62
Family Coaching: 55
Parent Education: 53
Parent Mentoring: 53
Parent Coaching: 50

Home Visiting: 34

These results strongly indicate using language other than "Home-Visitation" to describe the program will enhance engagement of families and stakeholders.

The phrase "Home-Visiting" conjures up associations that are more negative and does not convey the benefits of the program",

Why is this relevant to you?

- Consider other language to describe your program to potential consumers and other agencies.
- When describing your program, focus on the benefits
 to the potential consumers, such as the convenience of being in the home rather than having to travel to a
 clinic with young children.
- Using terms such as Home-Based Parenting, parentPRO, or Family Support may improve engagement from family members and stakeholders.

¹McInturff, McCleskey, & Bloomfield (2014). Public opinion on home visiting. Presented at the National Summit on Quality in Home Visiting Program. Washington DC.

Bard, D., Wilson, T., Silovsky, J.F., Beasley, L., & Beasley, W. (2014). Community Perception of Home Visitation. Oklahoma City, OK: Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Contact information – david-bard@ouhsc.edu