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Illuminate Colorado Takes On New Role Supporting Home Visiting in Colorado

Denver, CO (March 23, 2021) – **Illuminate Colorado** (Illuminate) announced the organization has become the state office for **Healthy Families America** (HFA), **Prevent Child Abuse America**'s (PCA America) signature home visiting program and one of the leading family support and evidence-based home visiting programs in the United States.

This expansion of Illuminate programs and services strengthening families, organizations and communities in Colorado means the organization will coordinate communication with HFA sites within the state, serve as a conduit of communication to the national office and provide a voice in Colorado for HFA, while advocating for a continuum of home visiting services in Colorado.

“Our organization has a strong history of partnering on national, state and local levels to promote the benefits of home visiting in Colorado. We know that early, nurturing relationships are the foundation for healthy development and essential for children to reach their full potential. As the Colorado Chapter of PCA America, we are excited to take on this new role supporting the local HFA sites here in Colorado,” said **Jade Woodard executive director for Illuminate**. “Home visiting programs should be a critical component of every community’s plan to prevent child maltreatment. Places where everyone recognizes our shared obligation to help parents be the parents they want to be are societies where children and families thrive,” continued Woodard.

HFA is a two-generation home visiting model proven to demonstrate powerful outcomes for children, parents and communities. The home visiting model has the highest rating of “well-supported” by Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse, giving states and county human service agencies the ability to pay for HFA services with federal resources made available through the Family First Prevention Services Act.

“A wide range of studies show that when parents participate in HFA, children are healthier, experience fewer adverse childhood events and demonstrate long-term improvements in school performance,” said **Dr. Melissa Merrick, president and chief executive officer of PCA America**, a nonprofit dedicated to addressing child trauma. “Additionally, we see an increase in family functioning and self-sufficiency, as well as broad health and fiscal benefits—these are among the many positive impacts HFA has on

communities, and we're proud to be partnering with Illuminate Colorado to extend home visiting across the state."

Studies of HFA show parents experience dramatic gains in education, leading to increased family income and tax revenues for the community. Children in families involved in HFA score higher on tests measuring cognitive development and improve academic performance. **Healthier birth rates, lower complications, and reductions in child neglect and abuse** are also correlated with participation in HFA, with rigorous studies showing a **70% reduction in pregnancy complications and 48% fewer cases of low-weight births.**

Much is being done right now to ultimately ensure home visiting is available to families in all Colorado communities. **The Early Childhood Leadership Commission Home Visitation Investment Task Force** is working to develop a strategy to scale a home visiting continuum.. In addition to serving on this task force, Illuminate is proud to support and collaborate through multiple coalitions working to strengthen and advance effective home visiting services across Colorado and prevent infant and maternal mortality.

There are two community-based organizations currently using the HFA home visiting model in Colorado; **Early Childhood Partners Healthy Families Vail Valley** (Healthy Families Vail Valley) program serves families in the Eagle River Valley and the **Family Visitor Program Healthy Families Aspen to Parachute** program (Family Visitor Programs) serves families in that Colorado region.

"Since Family Visitor Programs brought the Healthy Families America model to Colorado in 2011, we have anticipated the day HFA could be represented by a state office," said **Sandy Swanson, executive director Family Visitor Programs.** "Illuminate's willingness to take on this role will strengthen and expand the model by making it available to all communities in Colorado."

"Healthy Families Vail Valley is thrilled to see the HFA model strengthened in Colorado with the development of Illuminate Colorado as our state intermediary," said **Megan McGee Bonta, manager, of the Healthy Families Vail Valley program.** "It will help build a stronger network to serve and build resilience in Colorado families and children and we look forward to continuing to partner with the organization and the incredible work they are doing!"

About Illuminate Colorado

Illuminate Colorado is a statewide nonprofit strengthening families, organizations and communities to prevent child maltreatment. With a research-based approach that emphasizes building promotive and protective factors, we address systemic and multi-sector issues by collaborating with families and partners at the community, state and national level to develop and implement powerful programs, policies and initiatives that keep kids safe in Colorado. Visit www.IlluminateColorado.org to learn more.

About Prevent Child Abuse America/Healthy Families America

Prevent Child Abuse America is a leading champion for all children in the United States. Founded in 1972 and headquartered in Chicago, we are the nation's oldest and largest

organization dedicated to the primary prevention of child abuse and neglect, working to actively prevent all forms of child abuse and neglect before they occur. Our success is founded on a nationwide network of state chapters and nearly 600 Healthy Families America home visiting sites, which directly provide parents and caregivers a wide variety of services and resources that help children grow up to be productive, contributing members of their communities and society. Our comprehensive approach is informed by science—we translate and disseminate innovative research to promote proven solutions that our vast network then puts into action. And we raise public awareness and advocate for family friendly policies at the national, state, and local levels to support transformative programs and promote the conditions and contexts that help children, families, and communities across the country thrive. Visit [preventchildabuse.org](https://www.preventchildabuse.org) to learn more.

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