

Dear _____,

Help Me Grow (HMG) is an effective system that builds on existing resources and connects at-risk children through age eight with the services they need. This model is currently being replicated in 18 states throughout the country. I am pleased to share with you that District of Columbia will be joining this initiative by becoming the 19 affiliate site. Therefore, I am requesting your involvement in building the District's *HMG* system for our children.

The *HMG* system was developed in response to the recognition that children at risk for developmental and behavioral problems are too often eluding early detection and that there is consensus by the experts that early detection and connection to services lead to the best outcomes for children with developmental or behavioral issues.

The *HMG* system is based on universal, early surveillance, screening and detection for all children through age eight, and then linking families to existing community-based programs

The Department of Health, with support from the *HMG* National Center, is the lead in the planning process for implementing a *HMG* system. (For more information on *HMG*, visit the *Help Me Grow* National Center website at <http://www.helpmegrownational.org/> or contact Joanna Bogin, Project Manager, at Jbogin@ccmckids.org, or by phone at 860 837-6267. The *HMG* National Center is based at Connecticut Children's Medical Center, the Office of Community Child Health under the direction of Dr. Paul Dworkin, who also developed the *HMG* system.)

The success of *HMG* is dependent on the support and involvement of a broad array of partners including you, along with other stakeholders, families, and providers of health care, child care and related services designed to service young children and their families.

We are "officially" beginning the process by holding a meeting in September that will bring staff from the National Center to DC who will assist us in developing a leadership team and clarify the expectations involved in all aspect of this planning process. To prepare for the September meeting, staff from the National Center will be conducting key informant interviews. These interviews will provide an opportunity for those being interviewed to learn more about *HMG* as well as to share their knowledge, expertise and thoughts on potential resources that can contribute to building the system. The information collected will be shared at the September meeting and inform the planning process.

I would appreciate it if you contact Edwina Davis, [title] at _____ to let her know if you would be willing:

1. to be interviewed by staff from the National Center. If so, Sara Sibley from the National Center will contact you directly to schedule the not more than an hour telephone interview.
2. to attend the September meeting, which has been scheduled for _____ from _____ at _____. A formal invitation will be sent out in July.

Your involvement and support of this work is essential for its success. Therefore your participation (or others representing your agency) is greatly appreciated.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

Sincerely,