

COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

MCH Training Program

PROGRAM HISTORY AND STRATEGY

Communication disorders can severely impede healthy child development and result in significant disabilities. Many of these conditions are chronic and progressive and place significant burdens on the child, the child's family, and society. In the early



1990s, to meet the needs of children with communication disorders, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) began supporting centers of excellence in communication disorders. These grants were awarded to institu-

tions of higher learning for the purpose of training speech-language pathologists and audiologists to provide comprehensive services to children and their families, and to promote the advancement of the field through information and knowledge dissemination. Currently, MCHB grant funds are supporting centers of excellence that are advancing health professionals' skills in caring for children with communication disorders. This training is based upon the principles expressed in *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents*, the flagship publication of MCHB's Bright Futures Initiative.

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

The primary objective of the communication disorders program is to provide a national focus on leadership through the following: (1) graduate training of speech-language pathologists and audiologists for leadership roles in education, service, research,

administration, and advocacy; (2) development and dissemination of curricula, teaching models, and other educational resources to enhance maternal and child health (MCH) content in communication disorders training programs; and (3) continuing education, consultation, and technical assistance in communication disorders, geared to the needs of the MCH community.

HIGHLIGHTS

Graduate Education. Students enrolled in the training program receive training in several areas, including the following: (1) a multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary approach to care management of young children, especially those at risk for communication disorders; (2) leadership programs such as apprenticeships and seminars; and (3) enrichment programs designed to establish and maintain mechanisms to bring together trainees from varied disciplines to share ideas and knowledge.

Faculty Development. This MCH program supports faculty from a variety of disciplines by helping them to develop and to enhance curricula, teaching models, and other educational resources for the purpose of improving pediatric content in health care programs at all levels of higher education. Faculty are also supported and encouraged to use both qualitative and quantitative analytic techniques and advanced technology for learning on-site and in remote areas.

Continuing Education. Communications disorders projects provide MCH consultation and technical assistance that is geared to the needs of the MCH community, including health professionals, policymakers, and parents. These projects have brought

courses and in-service training to hundreds of practicing professionals in hospitals, clinics, universities, private-practice offices, and public schools. Nationally recognized experts often serve as facilitators. Examples of the offerings include grand rounds, guest lecture series, consultant lectureships, and symposia.

PROGRAM PROFILE

- In FY 1999, MCHB funded three programs in communication disorders, with annual grant awards totaling \$434,000.
- The grant awards range from \$133,000 to \$167,000 per year, with a mean award of \$145,000.

Present Grant Recipients

STATE	GRANTEE
DC	Howard University
OK	University of Oklahoma
TN	Vanderbilt University

BIBLIOGRAPHY

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. 1997. *Maternal and Child Health Center for Leadership in Communications Disorders Education: Application Guidance*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

