

# Division of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Workforce Development: Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND)

## MISSION

Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) programs provide interdisciplinary training to enhance the clinical expertise and leadership skills of professionals dedicated to caring for children with neurodevelopmental and other related disabilities including autism. Since their inception, LENDs have trained thousands of individuals from a wide variety of disciplines to work with and provide the best possible services and supports for children with developmental disabilities (DD) and their families. The focus of these training programs has always been on children with a wide range of intellectual and developmental disabilities and special health care conditions, especially medically fragile children with multiple or complex challenges. More recently, an additional focus has been added to this network's mission. The Combating Autism Act of 2006 (Public Law 109-416) brought additional funds to the LEND program to promote education, early detection, and intervention in autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The Act was reauthorized in 2011 and again in 2014 and was renamed the Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support Act of 2014, or Autism CARES Act<sup>1</sup>. Trainees in LEND programs participate in academic, clinical, leadership and community opportunities and receive training in cultural and linguistic competence using a family centered approach.

## PROGRAM PROFILE

MCHB currently funds 43 programs at universities and children's hospitals across the nation. A new cohort of LEND programs will begin July 1, 2016 for a period of five years. The funding amount is \$29 million, with at least \$1 million designated for new programs.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the LEND Training Program is to improve the health of children who have, or are at risk for, neurodevelopmental or related disabilities by preparing trainees from a wide variety of professional disciplines to assume leadership roles and to ensure high levels of clinical competence. Through the addition of autism funds, LENDs carry out the following activities:

1. Increase awareness of ASDs;
2. Reduce barriers to screening and diagnosis of ASD and DD;
3. Promote evidence based interventions for individuals with ASD and other DD; and
4. Train professionals to utilize valid screening tools to diagnose and rule out ASD and DD.

## Program Impact

- ▶ **Trainees.** In FY 2013, the LEND training program trained 1,326 long-term trainees, 3,725 medium-term trainees, and 10,264 short-term trainees. Over 20% of long-term trainees are from underrepresented racial groups and 8% are from underrepresented ethnic groups.
- ▶ In FY 2013, nearly 77% of LEND program graduates (5 years following completion of program) are engaged in work related to MCH populations and 81% demonstrated field leadership in academic, clinical, public health practice, and/or public policy and advocacy activities.
- ▶ **Faculty.** LEND faculty mentor students in exemplary clinical and MCH public health practice for children with disabilities, provide continuing education on the latest research and practice to professionals currently in the field, and develop innovative curricula on interdisciplinary leadership practices for children with ASD and DD.
- ▶ **Title V.** In FY 2013, LEND training programs reported collaborating with State Title V (MCH) agencies or other MCH-related programs on over 6,300 activities in areas of service, training, continuing education, technical assistance, product development and research.

<http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/training/>



# Division of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Workforce Development

**The Division of MCH Workforce Development provides national leadership and direction in educating and training our nation's future leaders in maternal and child health.** Special emphasis is placed on the development and implementation of interprofessional, family-centered, community-based and culturally competent systems of care across the entire life course because experiences in one life stage shape health in later stages.

The Division, part of HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau, supports programs established in federal legislation ([Title V of the Social Security Act](#) and the [Autism CARES Act](#)) to complement state and local health agency efforts. The Division collaborates with state MCH programs, academic institutions, professional organizations, and other health training programs of the federal government, to ensure that MCH initiatives are unique and based on evidence-based practices.

In FY 2015, the Division of MCH Workforce Development awarded 109 training grants, an investment of approximately \$47 million. Grants are awarded to develop trainees for leadership roles in the areas of MCH teaching, research, clinical practice, and/or public health administration and policy making.

## Program Contacts

Robyn Schulhof, MA  
301-443-0258  
[rschulhof@hrsa.gov](mailto:rschulhof@hrsa.gov)

Denise Sofka, MPH, RD  
301-443-0344  
[dsofka@hrsa.gov](mailto:dsofka@hrsa.gov)



## 2012-2020 NATIONAL GOALS

### MCH WORKFORCE & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Address current and emerging MCH workforce needs by engaging and providing training for and support to MCH leaders in practice, academics, and policy.

### DIVERSITY & HEALTH EQUITY

Prepare and empower MCH leaders from diverse communities to promote health equity, wellness, and reduce disparities in health and healthcare.

### INTERDISCIPLINARY / INTERPROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Promote interdisciplinary/interprofessional training and practice and interorganizational collaboration to enhance systems of care for MCH populations.

### SCIENCE, INNOVATION & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Generate and translate new knowledge for the MCH field in order to advance science-based practice, innovation, and quality improvement in MCH training, policies, and programs.



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<sup>1</sup> Combating Autism Act of 2006, Sec. 399BB(e)(1)(A)(B)