

## KEY FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE MOTHERS 2 MOTHERS PROGRAM IN KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

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### **Background**

The Mothers 2 Mothers Programme (m2m), is a PMTCT program. It came into being after realization of the need for PMTCT services to provide relevant information and ongoing psychosocial support to HIV-positive pregnant women and mothers. The m2m services also present an opportunity for secondary prevention strategies targeted at HIV-positive women and their partners. This study evaluates the effectiveness of a peer psychosocial support group for pregnant and postpartum women who are HIV positive.

### **Methods**

Research sites were identified at three (3) health facilities in Pietermaritzburg. An evaluation of the programme was undertaken during baseline and follow up. There were n=183+345 HIV+ pregnant women and n=178+350 HIV+ postpartum women who were interviewed. A subsequent qualitative study was undertaken where a purposefully selected sample of 12 women were interviewed. These were postpartum women who had actively participated in the program and had previously expressed that the program had a positive impact on coping with HIV.

### **Results**

The programme had substantial coverage and high rates of participation by both pregnant and postpartum women; participants had greater knowledge of PMTCT; most reported practicing an exclusive feeding method and using contraceptives; and they had better psychosocial well-being. The services of the m2m program were well received by women who participated; it encouraged HIV testing and family disclosure; decreased suicidal tendencies and revived hope; there was less self-stigmatisation; reduced mother-to-child transmission, and it encouraged support and adherence to treatment.

### **Conclusions**

The Mothers 2 Mothers program helped in reducing transmission of HIV. It helped in HIV testing and in dealing with test results, and women were assisted and encouraged to disclose.

1. *Health Systems Trust*

2. *Population Council*