

Every Baby Deserves a Healthy Start!



Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions
2009 Snapshot

Acknowledgement

The FAHSC gratefully acknowledges the Florida Association of Health Plans for underwriting this 2009 report and Ron Sachs Communications for its design services.

Data

Statistics are from published state and national data. For consistency, data is reported for 2006, the most recent year that both state and national data are available.

Florida's Healthy Start

In 1991 the Florida Legislature created the Healthy Start program, the first effort in the nation to provide a comprehensive system of community-driven services to reduce infant mortality and promote healthy child development. Legislation expanded Medicaid coverage for pregnant women to 185% of poverty, established a network of community-based coalitions, and funded care coordination and community prevention and intervention services. The program offers universal screening of all pregnant women and newborns to identify mothers and babies at-risk and link them with services.

Healthy Start Coalitions

The primary responsibility of Healthy Start Coalitions is to improve efficiency and effectiveness of local health care delivery systems for pregnant women and infants. Coalitions leveraged nearly \$32 million dollars in fiscal year 2008; a significant addition to the investment provided by the Florida Legislature. Coalitions ensure that systems of care are responsive to poor pregnancy and birth outcomes. Each year, leveraged funds are used to fill gaps in care, increase services to families, and implement innovative programs. There are presently 30 community based Healthy Start Coalitions covering 64 of Florida's 67 counties. They are community leaders and function as local resources for maternal child health issues. Coalitions engage the community in all aspects of Healthy Start system planning, service provision, and evaluation activities.

Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions

In 1994 the Coalitions organized the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions (FAHSC) to provide a statewide communications network for the exchange and dissemination of concepts, ideas, procedures, and resources related to maternal and child health. The Mission is to "strengthen maternal and child health by ensuring that all Florida families have access to a continuum of affordable and quality health and related services and to advocate for public policy initiatives to facilitate those services." The Association is a strong voice for Florida's babies and their families.



Statewide Improvements

In 2001 a Medicaid Waiver was granted to the Department of Health to intensify Healthy Start services for the most at-risk pregnant women and infants. Coalitions ensured women covered by Medicaid received early and adequate prenatal care.

In 2005 the scope of Healthy Start services was expanded to include *interconception* education and support in response to new data and findings about the impact of the pre-pregnancy health of mothers on birth outcomes. Poor birth outcomes may be the result of poor health (including obesity) prior to pregnancy.

In 2008 the universal Healthy Start prenatal and infant screening tools were refined to reflect current research on risk factors that are associated with poor birth outcomes.

In 2007 the Florida Legislature funded the Black Infant Health Practice Initiative to address the disparities in black infant mortality in eight counties where the black infant mortality rate was at least twice as high as the white infant mortality rate. Funding was allocated for the counties, in partnership with the Florida Department of Health, the University of South Florida and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), to conduct quantitative and qualitative research, including focus groups and town hall meetings. The participating counties continue to communicate on a regular basis. Findings were shared and all have worked to translate the research into practice in their communities. Notable was the shared emphasis on the importance of maternal health, assuring that women are healthy before they conceive.

Infant Mortality in the South

In 2006 babies born in the South still had less chance of living past their first birthday than babies born in northern states. The infant mortality rates of these eight southern states: Alabama (9), Arkansas (8.5), Georgia (8.1), Louisiana (9.9), Mississippi (10.6), North Carolina (8.1), South Carolina (8.4), and Tennessee (8.7), are all higher than Florida's infant mortality rate of 7.25 deaths per thousand births.³ Florida's infant mortality rate has fallen from 9.6 in 1990 to 7.25 in 2006. Florida's Healthy Start program is given much of the credit for this significant improvement in infant mortality rates.



By the Numbers

Demographics

The number of resident Florida births in 2006 (239,120) ranked Florida 4th in the nation behind California (562,440), Texas (399,603) and New York (250,104)². Florida communities are diverse demographically and culturally. Coalitions are both urban and rural covering large areas of land and population. Nineteen coalitions represent a single county and eleven represent multiple communities; ranging from two counties in the Flagler & Volusia Coalition to twelve counties in the North Central Coalition (Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Suwannee, and Union). In 2006 three of Florida's counties Miami-Dade (25,142), Hillsborough (13,274), and Broward (13,196) individually had more births in each county than the nine lowest ranked states. Miami-Dade alone had more births than 14 states including Idaho, West Virginia, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Maine, Montana, Rhode Island, Delaware, South Dakota, Alaska, North Dakota, District of Columbia, Wyoming, and Vermont.

Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)

Eleven of Florida's Healthy Start Coalitions provide the infrastructure for Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR). This process, developed by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and endorsed by the March of Dimes, determines why babies are dying through a locally driven review. It provides insight into interventions that are needed to prevent future losses. There are over 300 FIMR projects nationally in 40 states. FIMR is a continuous quality improvement process that is similar to "root cause analysis." It provides targeted interventions and solutions to local problems related to infant mortality.

Healthy Start Services

A major strength of Healthy Start is the universal prenatal and infant risk screen utilized by both Healthy Start and Healthy Families to identify women and infants in need of services. In 2007, Healthy Start provided services to 111,989 pregnant women and 78,102 infants. While the number served fell by less than 1%, the number of services increased by 8.4%. The total number of services rendered for women and infants in 2007 was over 3 million (3,186,867).⁴ Services included care coordination, mental health counseling, parent education (SIDS, Shaken Baby, Safe Sleep), breastfeeding counseling, nutrition education, smoking cessation, childbirth education, and substance abuse counseling. These services provide pregnant women and their families with support designed to promote healthy births and their baby's healthy growth and development.

Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions' Goals¹

- Promote local, state, and federal action necessary to support and ensure the availability of quality maternal and child health and related services.
- Facilitate and coordinate technical assistance to maternal and child health and related service agencies regarding data collection, the development of program components, special services and the expansion of maternal and child health and related services.
- Advocate for adequate funding to meet maternal and child health and related needs.
- Identify and secure common factors that impact/influence maternal and child health status and develop statewide strategies.
- Facilitate cooperation, collaboration, and networking toward common goals with related organizations.
- Identify grants and funding for education, health services, research, human resource development, and cooperative efforts, which will directly benefit maternal and child health.
- Support and strengthen all coalitions through continued education, training, and mentoring activities.



Meeting the Need

The Coalitions, their communities, and the Legislature succeeded in increasing funds for Healthy Start twice in the past seventeen years. However, funds do not meet the need. As costs and births have increased so has the demand for services (up 8.4% in 2007 alone). First year medical costs for premature babies are about 10 times more than a full term infant; \$3,325 versus \$32,325⁵. Prevention costs less than rehabilitation. In response to the poor economy, less revenue and rising needs, the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions is taking a proactive approach by identifying and developing more efficient processes. During the next two years it will take a supportive partnership between FAHSC and Department of Health leadership to implement efficiencies in the Healthy Start program.

Local Community Initiatives

Brevard County Healthy Start Coalition successfully implemented the “Seras Madre” program with support from the Low Birth Weight/Hispanic Committee. Seras Madre is providing outreach to the Hispanic community thereby increasing early access to prenatal care, education and support for non-English speaking women at their delivery. This is resulting in better birth outcomes.

Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition partnered with the Cribs for Kids National Program to reduce the incidence of sleeping infant deaths. The Coalition raised funds to purchase and distribute over one hundred cribs to families in Leon and Wakulla counties. Leveraged \$175,782.

Charlotte Healthy Start Coalition and the Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center sponsored a workshop for area healthcare and service providers on the importance of cultural competency and its relevance to health care delivery. Leveraged \$28,650.

Flagler Volusia Healthy Start Coalition has adopted SIDS Sunday throughout the African American church community on the 3rd Sunday of October. The Coalition provides safe sleep instruction and practices to families, the community, and agencies that serve babies under the age of 1 year. Leveraged \$870,588.

Florida Keys Healthy Start Coalition received a Florida Department of Transportation grant to purchase child safety seats and certify installation technicians. Expanded the number of loaned breast pumps for mothers returning to the workplace. Provided lactation certification training for their community partners and care coordination staff. Leveraged \$74,236.

Hardee, Highlands and Polk Healthy Start Coalition and the Polk County Health Department were the second to be awarded accreditation in the state of Florida for a Centering Pregnancy program by the Centering Healthcare Institute. In this last fiscal year, nearly 300 women participated in the Centering Pregnancy programs offered by the Hardee and Polk County Health Departments.

Hillsborough Healthy Start Coalition’s Healthy Mom Program targets the health status and habits of mothers who had infants in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Tampa General Hospital to decrease the likelihood of a repeat poor birth outcome. A (bilingual) health educator works with mom in her home to provide family planning information, blood pressure screenings, weight monitoring, and goal tracking to achieve overall wellness.

Indian River Healthy Start Coalition developed a logic model and assessment tools for TLC (Touch Love Communicate), a universal program for all families. TLC assists with lactation, infant safety, identifying normal infant development, sibling rivalry, parent confidence, and safety net referrals for family issues, health, and depression during the first year of life. Leveraged \$652,985.

Jefferson, Madison, Taylor Healthy Start Coalition used a Closing the Gap grant to implement contracts for women's health ministries in 10 African American churches. The Coalition sponsors Group Prenatal Care programs in Jefferson, Madison, and Taylor Counties, targeting African American pregnant women for prenatal education, including providing infant care classes for first-time African American moms. Leveraged \$485,121.

Manatee Healthy Start Coalition has community-based independent contractors who provide care coordination directly to clients that are seen by private obstetricians and pediatricians; clinic-based care coordination provided by Manatee County Rural Health Services family health centers; and hospital-based independent contractors who visit the new mother in the hospital at the time of birth to conduct the initial contact for Healthy Start care coordination services. Leveraged \$41,608.

Orange County Healthy Start Coalition focused on activities designed to reduce racial disparities, reduce low birth weight and prematurity, reduce SIDS and increase access to prenatal care. Their racial disparities program, Save Our Babies, provides outreach, education, and public awareness with funding from the CJ Foundation and the March of Dimes and additional funding from several smaller sources. Leveraged \$151,242.

Palm Beach County Healthy Start Coalition refined its system of care over the past two years informed by research from the Coalition's Black Infant Health Practice Initiative. Key program components include: Entry Agencies for screening and secondary assessments, Centering Pregnancy Model, Nurse Family Partnership, a Nurse Model for pregnant women/infants with medically complex conditions, Community Voice for outreach and education, consistent curriculum, interconception education, strengthening of nutrition counseling and breastfeeding education/support, Nurse of the Day Advice Line, and a Lifecourse Model to build protective factors and self-sufficiency.

Pinellas Healthy Start Coalition prenatal screening rates increased by 20% this year. Healthy Start Resource Guides and toolboxes were developed and distributed to 52 pediatric practices in Pinellas County. A statewide social marketing campaign for first-time mothers is being implemented with HRSA funding. The Coalition is also participating in an Action Learning Collaborative to address the impact of racism on birth outcomes and infant health (funded by CityMatch and Kellogg Foundation). Leveraged \$384,863.

Saint Lucie Healthy Start Coalition formed an umbrella organization in 1999 for maternal child health services. It houses several other MCH programs as well as a CDC funded project for HIV prevention. It provides many needed services to the women and children of St. Lucie County. Leveraged 1.7 million dollars.

Healthy Start Coalition of Southwest Florida led partnerships with 18 different agencies to conduct collaborative outreach and education in the community; reaching more than 8,258 people through community educational baby showers, farm worker outreach, and community events. Educational material was distributed to over 40 medical clinics and hospitals and an additional 440,000 households were reached through monthly TV health education spots. Two new Healthy Start videos were produced and will air on television and in hospitals and clinics. Leveraged \$122,550.

(Endnotes)

1 - Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions, Bylaws:2007, 2 - cdc.gov/nchs/vitalstats, 3 - datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings, 4 - Florida Department of Health's Annual Healthy Start Report 2007, 5 - Preterm Birth: Causes, Consequences and Prevention, 2006 The Institute of Medicine. Funded in part by the March of Dimes.



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