Legislative Update

The 2012 Legislative Session provided two positive outcomes for pregnant women, children, and families in the State of Florida.

After careful consideration, Healthy Start funding was partially restored.

In 2011, Healthy Start received a budget cut of $5.4 million during the final hours of the legislative session. This cut upset a vital system of care that serves women and babies identified as being at risk for premature birth, infant death, or other poor birth outcome.

During this year’s Legislative Session, $2.2 million in recurring funds and $1 million in non-recurring funds have been allocated for partial restoration of the Healthy Start Budget that was cut last year.

According to the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions, research shows that women who received Prenatal Care Coordination services were found to have significantly better birth outcomes, including fewer low-birth-weight infants, fewer very-low-birth-weight infants, fewer preterm infants, and fewer infants transferred to the neonatal intensive care units. Investing in programs for children from before birth to age 5 produces economic benefits and high rates of return.

Additionally, House Bill 227 and Senate Bill 402, sponsored by Representative Kelli Stargel and Senator Joe Negron, establishes a Statewide Task Force on Prescription Drug Abuse and Newborns to study Neonatal Withdrawal Syndrome in the state.

The bill requires the Task Force to collect and analyze data, examine ways to increase public awareness, and explore possible solutions to the problem. The bill also specifies membership and other duties of the Task Force.

The 15 members of the Task Force include the Attorney General, State Surgeon General, Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration, Executive Director of the Department of Law Enforcement, two State Legislators, two representatives from the Florida Medical Association, a representative from the March of Dimes, a representative from Healthy Start, a representative of the Florida Nurses Association, and a state resident.

The Task Force will evaluate methods to increase public awareness of the dangers associated with prescription drug abuse by pregnant women and the dangers posed to newborns as a result of maternal prescription drug abuse during pregnancy. By submitting policy recommendations to address the problem, the hope is that the Task Force will lead the way against this epidemic.

Child Abuse Prevention

The pinwheel represents Prevent Child Abuse America’s efforts to change the way our nation thinks about prevention, focusing on community activities and public policies that prioritize prevention right from the start to make sure child abuse and neglect never occur. Join us by bringing Pinwheels for Prevention to your community!

**An individual can:**
- Write to your elected officials about the importance of preventing child abuse and neglect
- Buy pinwheels and plant your own pinwheel garden
- Talk about prevention in your community
- Organize a fundraiser to raise awareness
- Serve on a committee or board

**A local organization can:**
- Organize your own Pinwheels for Prevention campaign by buying pinwheels and planting a garden
- Join Child Abuse Prevention Month activities in April or organize activities in your community
- Incorporate child abuse prevention into your work
- Discuss child abuse prevention at conferences and meetings

[Visit Pinwheels for Prevention](http://HealthyStartCoalition.org)
Thank you for your continued support of the Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County, Inc. Our spring newsletters traditionally bring news of legislative sessions and funding of the current year. As everyone knows, these can be anxious phases especially during years that require major budget cuts.

Collectively, communities statewide feel the pain when much needed services are minimized or eliminated. This year is no different as we watch many of our partners absorb budget cuts while increasing services to meet the needs of our citizens.

It is with great relief that I can report the Florida State Legislature has confirmed their commitment to infants, children, pregnant women and families by not only maintaining the level of funding to Healthy Start services but by also restoring dollars that were lost in budget cuts in 2011. With this much needed funding, we can continue to provide programs and initiatives that save lives while improving the health and well-being of our young families in Hillsborough County.

Additionally, legislation championed by Representative Kelli Stargel in the House and Senator Joe Negron in the Senate ensures the presence of Healthy Start representation at the table when the Prescription Drug Task Force Chaired by Attorney General Pam Bondi begins to meet in the upcoming year. Our participation is vital in providing advocacy for the most vulnerable and innocent victims of the prescription drug epidemic. We will be certain to keep our community updated on this issue.

Finally, I would like to emphasize our efforts promoting April as Child Abuse Prevention month. While we live this dedication year round, April provides an opportunity to inform Hillsborough County residents of the ongoing efforts in our community that protect children from harm and neglect.

Vigilance is required in our neighborhoods where the safety of children should remain a number one priority each and every day. It indeed takes a village to raise a child and we invite every resident of our county to take that responsibility seriously.

My continued gratitude to everyone who works so hard to protect, assist and support our families. You are truly the heroes that work every day to make this a safer community for children.

Sincerely,

Jane

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Lauren’s Kids

On February 6th, Lauren Book, Founder of Lauren’s Kids visited Mary Lee’s House as a part of her statewide Walk in My Shoes event. This event brings together survivors and advocates on a walk across Florida to raise awareness about sexual abuse, advocate for abuse prevention and help survivors to speak out.

For six years Lauren was a victim of sexual abuse by her childhood nanny. Today, she encourages victims to “shine a light in dark places” and “shed the shame.”

Lauren started Lauren’s Kids with a mission to prevent sexual abuse through awareness and education, and to help survivors heal with guidance and support. She has turned her horrific personal experience into a vehicle to prevent childhood sexual abuse and heal survivors.

The 39-day, 1,500-mile journey began in Key West on January 14th and ended on February 22nd on the steps of the historic Capitol in Tallahassee for the Lauren’s Kids Rally in Tally. The Rally included the final mile, Lauren’s call to action and memories from the Walk, and statements from state and local leaders.

For information about Lauren’s Kids, go to www.laurenskids.org or call the 24-hour hotline at (877) LKIDS-01.
Healthy Families Works

Healthy Families Florida is an evidence-based program that promotes positive parent-child interaction and childhood development. The goals of Healthy Families are to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect and to enhance parents’ ability to create stable and nurturing home environments.

Through a partnership with the Florida District Kiwanis and the Florida Child Abuse Death Review Committee, Healthy Families has created a campaign similar to local efforts driven by the Healthy Start Coalition’s Safe Baby Campaign. The Healthy Families campaign asks parents to think about who is watching their child and choose the best caregiver.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children living in households with unrelated adults are nearly 50 times as likely to die of inflicted injuries as children living with two biological parents. Mothers with limited options may leave their children with boyfriends who may lack the necessary knowledge of how to care for a baby, who feel no attachment or love for the child, resulting in potentially dangerous situations.

In response to the numerous cases reviewed by the State Child Abuse Death Review Committee that involved physical abuse and neglect cases where the perpetrator was a non-biological caregiver, in most cases the boyfriend, a campaign brochure challenges parents to spend time observing the caregiver with their child and asks a series of questions to be sure that the child is not at risk.

The flyer also offers helpful tips to cope with crying, promote safe sleep, advocate water safety, and remind parents about safe eating, diapering/toileting and discipline. Overall, the brochure educates parents about carefully choosing an appropriate person to watch their children while they are away from home.

Locally, Healthy Families Hillsborough also promotes positive parent-child interaction and childhood development through a voluntary, home visiting program for pregnant women or families with a newborn. Families are asked to commit to weekly home visits for the first six months and can remain in the program up to five years.

With Child Abuse Prevention Month nearing, it is critical to note that Healthy Families Hillsborough works. As of December 31, 2011, 99% of the families that were enrolled in Healthy Families Hillsborough for at least six months were free of any verified findings of abuse and neglect. In addition, 98% of the families that graduated from the local program were free of any verified findings of abuse and neglect.

To view the Healthy Families Florida flyer, click on the live link below and for more information on Healthy Families Hillsborough, contact Barbara Macelli, Healthy Families Hillsborough Program Manager at 233-2800, Ext. 118.

Positive Parenting Tips that Promote Good Behavior in Early Childhood

(from the Pinwheels for Prevention Parent Resource Booklet)

1. Keep a schedule – try to have them eat, nap, play at the same times each day

2. Offer encouragement – encouraging words help your child build confidence

3. Tell your child what can DO instead of telling them DON’T – instead of “don’t touch anything,” try “we are just looking”

4. Use simple explanations for rules or limitations and offer alternatives – try “it is time for bed, so you may play with the crayons tomorrow”

5. Practice giving choices – ask your child if they would like a banana or applesauce for snack
Provider Screening Rates
July 2011 – February 2012

Success 4 Kids & Families and the Healthy Start Program recently began an initiative focusing on pregnant and parenting youth and young adults from three vulnerable populations in Hillsborough County. The initiative targets young mothers between the ages of 11 to 22 who are currently in foster care, who have recently aged out of foster care and those who are homeless.

“The initiative aims to build a sense of community around the young mothers and their families. We want to help them beat the odds and succeed,” states Alliston Duryea, Success 4 Kids & Families/Healthy Start Program Outreach Coordinator and facilitator.

The key to the success of this community-wide initiative is the partnerships between the social service and governmental agencies serving these young families and the growing number of passionate community volunteers who pledge their support.

The partners committed to action include Alpha House of Tampa, Lazydays Homeless Youth Grant, Camelot Community Care - Independent Living Services, Hillsborough County Public Schools Teen Parent Program, Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office Juvenile Detention Centers, Layla’s House, Hillsborough Kids, Inc., Florida's Children First, Healthy Families Hillsborough, The Honorable Katherine Essrig and Eckerd Community Alternatives as well as representatives from the Allegany Franciscans Sisters, Bayshore Baptist-First Nesters Ministry and the Underground.

We have agreed to work together to help these families attain greater educational and financial success, deliver full-term, healthy babies, gain access to physical and mental health care services, acquire better parenting and life skills – and most importantly to let them know they are not alone,” says Duryea.

Because so many of these young mothers face past trauma, mental illness, on-going domestic violence and substance abuse, and suffer from severely low self-esteem Success 4 Kids & Families recently created a Healthy Start Program, high-risk case management position staffed by mental health counselor Alba Fernandez.

Ms. Fernandez will address the social, emotional and behavioral health issues of families deemed most at-risk while also providing them with in-home, intensive case management services.

In addition, initiative partners will host the first in a series of weekly “Real Talk Tuesday” events at Layla’s House located in Sulphur Springs at 1506 East Eskimo Avenue on Tuesday, April 17 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm.

This first event is open to pregnant and parenting females in foster care and those receiving services from Camelot Community Care - Independent Living or Lazydays Homeless Youth Grant. “Real Talk Tuesday” participants and facilitators will discuss such topics as: Empowerment, Self-Awareness, Decision Making, Healthy Social Networks, Bonding, Nutrition, Safety, Parenting, Infant Development as well as a wide range of other health, wellness and educational messages.

For more information on this initiative or for a Layla’s House “Real Talk Tuesday” schedule, please contact Alliston Duryea at (813) 871-7412, Ext. 129 or at aduryea@hstarthc.org.

Alpha House residents Turquoise Williams, son Xavier Williams and Nicole Davila take a break from their volunteer project of assembling prenatal information packets. The packets, containing Safe Baby, WIC, Breastfeeding, Preterm Labor, Childbirth and CBFRG information, are mailed to all new Healthy Start Program clients.
For the first time, the Healthy Start Coalition’s Zero Exposure Project (ZEP) held a presentation at Pediatric Grand Rounds at Tampa General Hospital to address the ever growing problem of opiate exposed newborns.

Dr. Jason B. Fields, University of Florida Fellow in Addiction Medicine and Medical Services Manager at Drug Abuse Comprehensive Coordinating Office (DACCO), partnered with ZEP to give pediatricians, residents and nursing staff much needed information to help addicted pregnant women and their babies.

Dr. Fields shared information about Opiate Addiction Treatment Services (OATS) that he is providing at DACCO. The program provides treatment for opiate dependent pregnant women. Recently, the program has seen much more prescription opiate misuse than heroin use. The OATS program treats patient’s addiction by prescribing methadone, which is the standard of care with opiate-dependent pregnant women. Methadone stops withdrawal at the receptor site and facilitates pro-social and productive behavior. The program offers individual counseling and intensive case management in order to effectively refer and link women to services in addition to methadone maintenance.

Dr. Fields discussed how care coordination with OB/GYN providers, pediatric providers and hospitals is critical to ensure that women and babies get the correct care throughout pregnancy, labor and delivery, and post-partum. OATS offers a postnatal visit where Dr. Fields checks the baby for Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). Methadone has 40 years of extensive research, showing that babies are more likely to have a higher birth weight, full head circumference and be born full term. Additionally, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding for mothers using methadone.

There are currently over 700 people in the program and Dr. Fields continues to accept referrals and enroll women. Contact Nancy Hoang at 384-4048 for more information and referrals.

Welcome, Dr. Sappenfield

William M. Sappenfield, MD, MPH recently started a new career at the University of South Florida as professor and chair of the Department of Community and Family Health and Director of the Lawton and Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies at the College of Public Health.

The Lawton and Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies promotes the health and well-being of mothers, babies and families. It integrates research, education and service to determine the most effective strategies, programs and systems for maternal and infant care.

As both a pediatrician and an epidemiologist, Dr. Bill Sappenfield has more than 27 years of experience in epidemiological teaching, research and practice in maternal and child health.

Dr. Sappenfield is a nationally recognized leader in the field of maternal and child health epidemiology and has received several national and state awards.

The vision of the Lawton and Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies is to be the first choice in the nation for maternal and child health research, education and service for scholars, practitioners, policy-makers, advocates, families and students and Dr. Sappenfield hopes to make that a reality.
Centers to Host Berenstain Bears for Child Abuse Prevention Month

The Children’s Board Family Resource Centers offer a comfortable environment where programs and services emphasize child development, family stability and success, and health and safety. In conjunction with Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Centers plan to promote positive messages to families on how to play, bond and support their children. In April, the Children’s Board Family Resource Centers will host the Berenstain Bears, and have planned various family activities such as arts and crafts, story time and coloring.

**Dates for Pinwheels for Prevention Events:**
- April 6, 10-11am, Central Tampa
- April 10, 10:30-11:30am, Town ‘N Country
- April 11, 10:30-11:30am, Brandon
- April 12, 10:30-11:30am, North Tampa
- April 13, 1-2pm, South County

In addition to the Berenstain Bears visit, the Centers will host a number of screening opportunities.

Prevent Blindness Florida will provide vision screening (ages 2-18) and St. Joseph’s Children’s Advocacy Center will be conducting hearing screening for children and youth (birth-18). There is no cost to participants and no appointment necessary.

**Vision & Hearing Screening dates:**
- April 12, 3:30-7:30pm, Town and Country
- April 13, 2-5pm, North Tampa
- April 20, 10am-2pm, South County
- April 24, 3-6pm, Central Tampa
- April 27, 2-5pm, Brandon

Mobile Preventative Dental Services (6 months-18) will be provided by Suncoast Community Health Centers in both Brandon and South County. There is no cost to participants, however please call for an appointment.

**Preventative Dental Services dates:**
- April 18 & May 16, 9am-5pm, Brandon
- April 24 & May 22, 9am-5pm, South County

For more information about the Children’s Board Family Resource Centers or more details on these upcoming events, please visit [www.familysupporthc.org](http://www.familysupporthc.org).

Safe Baby NICU Training

Over the past month, Community Outreach staff educated over 150 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Nurses at St. Joseph’s Women’s Hospital.

With this training, NICU nurses are better equipped to educate the mom and caregivers of an infant about how to choose a safe caregiver, prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome, and promote safe sleep practices. Babies placed in the NICU may have been born prematurely, have low birth weight, have birth defects, and/or various health problems. Any of these complications requires more caution on the part of the caregiver. Safe Baby provides an extra level of safety and support that these infants and caregivers.

The information presented was well-received with all attendees noting in their evaluation that the program enhanced their knowledge of infant safety. One attendee wrote, “Great teaching points for our families.” By sharing ways to keep baby safe, the NICU nurses will empower parents and caregivers to protect their infants.

The Safe Baby curriculum has now been trained to all four major hospitals in Hillsborough County as well as to various community partners. Another training attendee wrote, “Great to see community support that brings the same information to all hospitals.” Armed with this critical information, the ultimate goal of Safe Baby is to prevent infant mortality and protect our community’s children.

For more information about Safe Baby, please visit [www.safedelivery.org](http://www.safedelivery.org).
MomCare Hosts Semi-Annual Baby Shower

This month, 80 mothers-to-be, dads and grandparents came together for a day to celebrate their pregnancies and learn the essentials of infant care, childbirth and breastfeeding.

On March 2, MomCare hosted its semi-annual Baby Shower at the University Community Complex to offer soon to be parents the opportunity to learn from experts and gain access to valuable community resources.

MomCare is a program funded by the Florida Department of Health and the Agency for Health Care Administration that provides women seeking medical coverage for their pregnancy a simplified application process. MomCare clients receive guidance to select their prenatal care provider, assistance to schedule prenatal visits, and access to prenatal education and resources.

Many community organizations were present to offer education and resources. WIC provided breastfeeding and nutrition education, the Florida Poison Information Center offered education about household risks, and REACHUP provided education on stress management. Tampa General Hospital and the abcProgram of the Child Abuse Council also attended to provide families with helpful information.

REACHUP provided education on stress management. Tampa General Hospital and the abcProgram of the Child Abuse Council also attended to provide families with helpful information.

MomCare promotes healthy pregnancies and aims to improve birth outcomes. For more information, please call 233-2964.

The participants included MomCare clients, Healthy Start moms, and residents of both DACCO and Alpha House. All attendees participated in raffles and prize drawings throughout the day.
Mission Statement:
We are here
to improve the health and
well-being of pregnant women,
children and families in
Hillsborough County.

Thank You to our Funders
Allegany Franciscan Ministries, Inc.
Children’s Board of Hillsborough County
Florida Department of Health
Hillsborough County Health Department
March of Dimes
The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida