BabyFAQs Mobile Texting Campaign Launches

In collaboration with ReachUp, Inc., the Healthy Start Coalition has released a new mobile texting campaign to reach soon-to-be-parents and parents on the go. BabyFAQs offers text messages about family events, pregnancy, baby safety tips and more. To sign up for two text messages a week about frequently asked questions on a specific topic, simply text one of the following key words to 88079: SafeBaby, Events, Pregnancy, ForGuys, HealthyStart, or All. Normal data and text message rates apply.

Statewide Task Force on Prescription Drug Abuse and Newborns Formed

Jane Murphy, Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County’s Executive Director, has been appointed by the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions to represent Healthy Start on the Statewide Task Force. The Statewide Task Force on Prescription Drug Abuse and Newborns (HB 227 and SB 402) was convened by Attorney General Bondi to examine the scope of the problem, the costs associated with caring for babies with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), the long-term effects of the syndrome and strategies for preventing prescription drug abuse by expectant mothers.

Jane attended the first meeting held on April 24 in Tallahassee where she learned that the number one causes of death and Child Protection removal are currently attributed to prescription drug abuse.

The 15 members of the Task Force

Continued on page 2.
Happy Summer!

As we celebrate our 20 year anniversary at the Healthy Start Coalition, the theme reflects a vision that has been realized over two decades. Not only have we accomplished much of what we were designed to achieve; we have also grown and expanded with the changing times in our society.

This newsletter issue represents much of what we are today which is a large, strong organization dedicated to saving the lives of infants and to improving the quality of life for children and their families in Hillsborough County. We strive to reach people where they are and are proud of the fact that the Coalition is able to constantly change in order to reach those in need of services.

The launch of our latest campaign in partnership with REACHUP, Inc., BabyFAQ’s, utilizes the technology of text messaging in order to deliver valuable education and information to anyone who is interested in a healthier lifestyle. In keeping with those times, our extensive websites provide a wealth of information on each and every program offered in Hillsborough County. Links are available to all of our work on the main website at HealthyStartCoalition.org. I encourage you to look at all we have to offer.

Meantime, we have not abandoned the foundation of our work which is home visitation to pregnant women, infants and families county-wide who voluntarily accept valuable services in an effort to improve their quality of life.

Last year, alone, the Coalition provided over 24,000 services to infants and pregnant women. An additional 574 families received Healthy Families services while 23,189 children and parents were recipients of services at the Children’s Board Family Resource Centers.

There is much work to be done and the growth over the last two decades shows the Healthy Start Coalition’s determination to meet the needs of our residents. I look forward to moving ahead into the next decade and beyond with many more exciting opportunities to provide high quality relevant services which change lives for the participants.

Thank you Hillsborough County for twenty wonderful years!

With Gratitude,

Jane
Hillsborough Infant Mortality Rate Declines

The 2010 Infant Mortality rate (most recent final vital statistics data) in Hillsborough County declined to the lowest rate since Healthy Start began providing services. The rate of 7.4 per 1,000 live births was a 22% decline from the 2009 rate and a 33% decline from the 1992 rate (when Healthy Start began). This decline occurred for both those infants who die in the first month of life (neonatal) and those infants who die after that time within the first year of life (post-neonatal). This decline predominately occurred for Black infants, in both neonatal and post-neonatal deaths, reducing both the Black infant mortality rate by 34% and the disparity between Black and White infant deaths by 33% (RR 2.6 versus 3.9). While the 2011 provisional rate was slightly higher at 7.92, it still represented a decline from previous years.

In 2008, Healthy Start transitioned the care coordination system to a new lead agent Success 4 Kids & Families, Inc. Since that time, the Coalition has worked closely with our providers (S4KF; REACUP, Inc.; Champions for Children; St. Joseph’s Women’s Hospital) to meet our performance measures with the Florida Department of Health, improve productivity within the system of care and create linkages between hospital-based services and child welfare services and our care coordination system. Services have been implemented in the neonatal intensive care units, the child welfare system (both with families involved with the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Child Protection Services and teen parents aging out of foster care) and high-risk obstetrics. These initiatives are too new to determine their effect on the decline in infant mortality. However, they represent the Coalition’s effort to use the best data and evidence to address the County’s infant mortality rate and disparity between Black and White infant deaths.

Teaching Throughout the Community

Asef Mahmud and Kimberly Law are fourth year medical students at University of South Florida. They are teaching Healthy Start Coalition’s Safe Baby and Zero Exposure Project prevention information to third year medical students in Dr. Vinita Kiluk’s class.

The USF College of Medicine’s volunteer students have sustained this project for three years by recruiting and training upcoming fourth year medical students. For more information on bringing Safe Baby to your organization, clients or families, please contact Jessica Reynolds at jreynolds@hstart.org.

Safe Baby is funded by the Florida Department of Health, Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County and Children’s Board of Hillsborough County.
Sharing Valuable Information About Women’s Health

On May 30 the Healthy Start Coalition provided a training to 75 Hillsborough County Department of Health Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) employees. The training focused on the Coalition’s Interconceptional Care (ICC) curriculum, sharing valuable information about women’s health. Interconceptional Care focuses on the wellness of a non-pregnant female. By raising awareness of health issues that could be detrimental to a developing baby, the hope is for a healthier birth outcome for both mom and baby.

The Healthy Start Coalition’s ICC Curriculum follows the U.S. Centers for Disease Control’s recommendations, including the ten necessary components: Access to Care, Baby Spacing, Maternal Infections, Chronic Health Problems, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Environmental Risks, Mental Health, Smoking, and Substance Abuse. It offers women the opportunity to learn more about personal wellness and how to improve certain health issues.

WIC provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children. By training WIC employees on Interconceptional Care, they can in turn share this critical information with their clients.

The training featured experts on various ICC topics. Healthy Start Coalition employees Lisa Nugent and Julie Williamson presented information on family planning and physical activity. Lisa stressed the importance of family planning and provided information about each birth control option. Julie had the group moving with some easy indoor exercises and open discussion about ways to increase physical activity.

The group also heard from Dr. Cecilia M. Jevitt with University of South Florida (USF) College of Medicine to discuss “Obesity Prevention and its Impact on Pregnancy.” She shared guidelines for weight gain during pregnancy based on your Body Mass Index (BMI) before getting pregnant.

Dr. Thomas Brandon with Moffitt Cancer Center and USF shared valuable information about smoking cessation and the importance of quitting before and during pregnancy. He discussed the nature of nicotine dependence with relevance to pregnant and postpartum women and helping your pregnant patient quit and preventing postpartum relapse.

Karen A. Hodge with Hillsborough County Health Department Community Dental Health Program discussed oral health, stressing its importance and sharing valuable community resources.

Finally, Lisa Colen, Healthy Start Coalition Director of Community Outreach Education, shared why women’s wellness is critical to everyone. She reminded the WIC employees that they have the ability to touch women who are mothers, women who will become mothers, men who will be fathers, and grandparents who may end up parenting their grandchildren.

For more information on Interconceptional Care, please visit the ICC website at www.healthyicc.org
Preventative Dental Services Now Offered at All Centers

A Children’s Board Family Resource Center member from North Tampa wrote,

“We want to thank you for the wonderful program you have for my community, to help our children grow to their fullest potential. Your staff is excellent, efficient and very attentive. Altogether, wonderful! Thank you.”

This testimonial, like many others, shows how the Children’s Board Family Resource Centers meet the needs of individuals and families throughout Hillsborough County. There are many opportunities available for parents, children and individuals in Brandon, Central Tampa, North Tampa, South County and Town ‘N Country. Families throughout the community are encouraged to visit the Centers to discover the refreshing, homelike environment where caring staff and other families offer individuals support, opportunities and new friendships.

Recently the Centers partnered with the Tampa Family Health Centers in order to provide preventative dental services for the North Tampa, Central Tampa and Town ‘N Country Centers. Since January, Suncoast Community Health Centers have been in Brandon and South County, however the recent partnership allows all five Centers to offer preventative dental services to additional children throughout the community.

Children ages 6 months to 18 years can be treated on the mobile dental buses for preventative services and if further treatment is necessary, a referral will be made at the time of the visit.

The buses feature on-board digital radiographs, panoramic x-rays, computerized treatment rooms, state-of-the-art sterilization, and a friendly staff. There is no charge ($80 value), however it is necessary to call and make an appointment. Walk-ins may be seen if time permits, however participants that have a current dental home are not eligible.

Tampa Family Health Centers Preventative Dental Services Summer Schedule:

July 11, August 15 & September 5 from 9am to 2:30pm  
CENTRAL TAMPA  
1002 E. Palm Ave., Tampa, FL 33605, 204-1741

July 18, August 10 & September 12 from 9am to 2:30pm  
NORTH TAMPA  
1401-A E. Fowler Ave., Tampa, FL 33612, 558-1877

July 12, August 8 & September 7 from 9am to 2:30pm  
TOWN ‘N COUNTRY  
7520 W. Waters Ave., #8, Tampa, FL 33615, 356-1703

Suncoast Community Health Centers Preventative Dental Services Summer Schedule:

July 12 & August 7 from 9am to 5pm  
BRANDON  
1271 Kingsway Road, Brandon, Florida 33510, 740-4634

June 26, July 24 & August 28 from 9am to 5pm  
SOUTH COUNTY  
3030 E. College Ave., Ruskin, FL 33570, 641-5600

www.familysupporthc.org

Children’s Board Family Resource Centers Event Photos

AJ celebrates with his Mom, Leslie Brazel and Grandma, Belkys Morales at the Mother’s Day event in Brandon.

Luz Kamiski and her son Matthew enjoy a circus theme at the Mother’s Day event in South County.

Youjin Gutmann (right) and her daugher Youna entertain their out-of-town guests during a play group in North Tampa.
A Happy MomCare Client

The goal of the MomCare Program (funded by the Florida Department of Health and the Agency for Health Care Administration) is to improve birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality rates through a simplified application, guidance, education and care coordination services.

Over the past 10 years, MomCare services have almost doubled with 4,707 clients in 2002 and 8,047 clients in 2011. In addition, MomCare has touched over 1,600 mothers-to-be at their semi-annual Baby Showers which offer moms the opportunity to learn from experts and gain access to valuable community resources.

In a recent interview, Valerie, an appreciative MomCare client said, “With the help of MomCare my pregnancy was great! Every time I called with questions, my MomCare advisor was very helpful and got right back to me. I had full insurance and would definitely refer a friend.”

She went on to say that her MomCare Advisor shared a list of providers, from which she chose Women’s Health Care Florida, and how easy it was to get prenatal care throughout her pregnancy. For more information, call MomCare at 813-233-2964.

Healthy Families Graduate, Former Employee and Now Business Owner Shares Her Story

Clarissa Carruthers, a Healthy Families Hillsborough (HFH) graduate and former HFH Family Support Worker, has recently taken on a new endeavor.

In March, Carruthers opened Oopsie Daisy Upscale Boutique. The boutique serves as a training hub for her nonprofit organization, Abilities of America. Oopsie Daisy provides training to employ disabled citizens by offering hands-on retail skills and business counseling for workers with disabilities that desire entrepreneurial opportunities of their own. Carruthers said Oopsie Daisy allows her to make a living, help disabled workers and stimulate the local job market.

The boutique sells new and consigned maternity, infant, and small children’s clothing, furniture, and accessories. In addition, the store has an area in the back where they can host free monthly events, including sign language classes for moms and babies.

Carruthers’ nonprofit organization, Abilities of America, provides disability advocacy and consultation. Carruthers says that there are many competitors who assist potential employees, but no one who advocates to companies on behalf of these valuable and skilled employees. Abilities of America has applied for federal stimulus money to cover program costs and Carruthers hopes to encourage employers by creating incentives.

“The Healthy Families provided me an outlet to vent my frustrations. As a teen mom, I could rely on them for emotional support outside of my own family members. Upon graduation from the Maternal Child Health Coalition Healthy Families/Bright Beginnings Program, I was offered a position by the Program Director. She took a chance on me not only based on my undergraduate educational goals at that time, but more importantly because of the compassion I came to know and learn through the HFH Home Visiting Program. I could relate to other moms in similar situations. Looking back over the years and thinking of all the lives of the young mothers and participating fathers I possibly touched makes me thankful to know there was a program like HFH that existed for those families that did not have a support system like myself.

Fortunately for me, this was not the case and I had a very involved family that encouraged me to continue forth with my career goals despite being such a young mother. I can give sole credit to HFH for the professionalism in which I learned while being employed with the organization. I will forever be grateful for the many training opportunities they provided me during my time of service. Every HFH training certificate I possess has either helped me to attain a better paying job or a promotion and I attribute that to the efficient training program that they have in place for key staff in paraprofessional roles. Healthy Families is not only a necessary and imperative program for the common parental stressors of today, but without its existence, future child abuse statistics would be detrimental.”

– Clarissa Carruthers-Dodsworth

For more information on Abilities of America or Oopsie Daisy, visit www.abilitiesofamerica.org or www.oopsiedaisyboutique.com
On May 15, the Healthy Start Coalition membership had the opportunity to hear from Dr. Charles Mahan, a visionary and activist for maternal and child health for nearly 40 years. Dr. Mahan is currently the Dean and Professor Emeritus in the College of Public Health at the University of South Florida and The Lawton and Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies.

Dr. Mahan began his presentation telling a truthful “fairytale,” sharing the legendary vision of Lawton and Rhea Chiles and the origin of Healthy Start Coalitions. He first discussed the progress made in the 80’s, including better access to Medicaid for mothers and the establishment of the midwifery project, but also acknowledged the obstacles that still existed. When Governor Chiles took office, both he and his wife made it a priority to tackle maternal health issues. In 1991, Florida’s Healthy Start initiative was signed into law in order to provide universal risk screening to all of the state’s pregnant women and newborns. In addition, the initiative expanded Children’s Medical Services and Medicaid services for pregnant women.

Dr. Mahan noted that one of the most influential part of the Chiles’ vision was the establishment of Healthy Start Coalitions. The Coalitions offered a way to organize community partners in order to provide oversight and planning to improve maternal and child health. They also offered the necessary organization to ensure that the progress made did not diminish after the governor’s term.

Dr. Mahan also discussed issues that the Coalitions faced in the beginning. He noted the fact that they were just learning that behavioral issues were an integral part of infant mortality. Today, there are archives of information from 20 years of operations along with data analysis being used to help teach public health students how far Healthy Start has come.

Ultimately, the Coalitions have survived and thrived over the past 20 years thanks to the vision of Lawton and Rhea Chiles. Today, there are 31 Coalitions across Florida. Last year, Healthy Start Coalitions provided 3.5 million services for care coordination, mental health counseling and parent education. Dr. Mahan ended his presentation saying that he thought Governor Chiles was looking down thinking that this was exactly what he had in mind. As Governor Chiles once said, “I didn’t come here to stay, I came here to make a difference.”
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

Mission Statement:
We are here
to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women, children and families in Hillsborough County.