



# GETTING OFF TO A HEALTHY START

NATIONAL HEALTHY  
START ASSOCIATION  
1411 K Street, NW, Suite 1350  
Washington, DC 20005  
P 202.296.2195  
F 202.296.2197  
info@nationalhealthystart.org

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START ASSOCIATION

summer 2011

## in this issue

- 1 .....September is National Infant Mortality Awareness Month
- 2 .....President's Message
- 3 .....Letter from the Executive Director
- 4 .....Partner's Corner: National Fatherhood Initiative
- 5 .....Male Involvement Initiative
- 5 .....text4baby Summer Sign Up Contest
- 6 .....NHTSA News: Save the Dates, Summer Intern & New Website
- 7 .....Consumer Spotlight: Stan Huddleston
- 8 .....Legislative Update
- 9 .....RESEARCH NEWS –Women's Health & Fitness Day
- 10 .....Mark Your Calendars

## SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL INFANT MORTALITY AWARENESS MONTH

Last September, National Healthy Start Association launched a new Infant Mortality Awareness campaign, **Celebrate Day 366...Every Baby Deserves a Chance**. Throughout the month of September, we recognize National Infant Mortality Awareness Month, but NHTSA promotes the effectiveness of ongoing programs and efforts implemented to reduce infant deaths, low-birth weight, pre-term births and disparities in perinatal outcomes all year round.



The **Celebrate Day 366...Every Baby Deserves a Chance** Infant Mortality Awareness Campaign supports and inspires people from around the nation to take action in support of the Healthy People 2020 goal to improve the health and well-being of women, infants, children and families. Join the National Healthy Start Association and be part of the generation that ensures that every baby has a chance...

*To take their first step.*

*To say their first word.*

*To graduate from college.*

*To become President.*

*To Celebrate Day 366.*

### How can you get involved?

On our website ([www.nationalhealthystart.org](http://www.nationalhealthystart.org)) you can find resources on infant mortality and ways to raise awareness and organize fund-

raising events and advocacy activities in your communities.

**Fact card** New! NHTSA has developed a fact card on infant mortality that you can easily print and distribute at your events. The fact card can be downloaded as a PDF from [our website](#)

**Toolkit** You can find a toolkit to help Healthy Start projects, community organizations, and partners increase national awareness about the factors that contribute to infant mortality in the United States. The toolkit contents include promotional materials, suggested fundraising and advocacy activities, statistical resources and public relations and marketing tips. Download the toolkit on [our website](#).

**Web Badge** Download the [Celebrate Day 366 web badge](#) to post on your websites, blogs, and Facebook pages. The badge can be linked to the NHTSA "Raise Awareness" page to give all of your site visitors access to the Infant Mortality Awareness tools.

**Promotional Resource Items** Use the [order form](#) on our website to purchase items to spread Infant Mortality Awareness at your events for the month of September. There are t-shirts, onesies, backpacks and travel drinkware that can be special ordered from The Pin Man. These items will be available for order until September 30, 2011.

continued on page 7

## SAVE THE DATE



NHTSA 13th Annual  
Spring Conference  
March 11-14, 2012

Hyatt Regency Washington on  
Capitol Hill  
Washington, DC

## National Healthy Start Association

Stacey D. Cunningham, MSW, MPH  
Executive Director

Phyllis George, MPH  
Senior Program Manager

Elizabeth Perry  
Executive Assistant  
Communications Associate

### Board of Directors

Estrellita "Lo" Berry, President  
Lisa L. Derrick, Vice President  
Corrina Jackson, Secretary

Risë Ratney, Treasurer  
Alma Roberts, President Elect  
Cynthia Dean, Past President

Jean Craig, PhD  
Maurine Jones, PhD

Lisa Matthews  
Charlotte Parent  
Claudia M. Peña

Jesus Reynoso De Cordova  
Mahseeyahu Ben Selassie

Cheryl Squire Flint  
Brian Vaughn

Kimberlee Wyche-Etheridge, MD

### Editor

Phyllis George

### Assistant Editor

Elizabeth Perry

### Contributing Writers

Vince DiCaro, National Fatherhood  
Initiative

Paula Gammon, The Voices of Appala-  
chia Healthy Start

Yi Ran, NHSA Summer Intern

Kenneth Scarborough, REACHUP, Inc.

Jon Terry, President, Capitol Youth  
Strategies, LLC

### Photographs

Healthy Start New Orleans  
Tulsa Healthy Start

The Voices of Appalachia Healthy Start

The National Healthy Start Association  
is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.

The mission of NHSA is to be our na-  
tion's voice in providing leadership and  
advocacy for health equity services and  
interventions that improve birth outcomes  
and family wellbeing.

## president's message



# IT'S BEEN A BUSY QUARTER

## Our thanks and best wishes

In spite of these tumultuous political times, we have maintained our posture for serving our families. Special thanks go to the advocacy and education leadership, community stakeholders, participants, staff, and various Associations for assuring that the voices of some of the most vulnerable families in our country are heard.

However, there is no rest for the weary as we eagerly forge ahead in addressing the NHSA's three critical priorities for improving birth outcomes and women's health status: (1) effectively influencing policy and practice to improve overall health and wellness, (2) validating the relevance of perinatal services for underserved populations, and (3) linking the Life Course Model to practice to improve women's and infants' health.

In addition to our committed BOD members at large, we now stand ready to move the work of the NHSA forward with our committee chairs:

*Lo Berry, Executive*

*Risë Ratney, Finance*

*Alma Roberts, Strategy and Organizational  
Sustainability*

*Jean Craig, Board Governance*

*Cheryl Squire Flint, Government Relations*

*Claudia Peña, Membership Services*

*Lisa Derrick, Healthy Start Leadership  
Training Institute*

*Kenn Harris, Advisory*

During the past quarter, our efforts have been focused and fervent! Our approach includes maintaining advocacy for level funding, developing the NHSA's outcome evaluation framework, planning the NHSA's Healthy Start 20th Anniversary celebration activities, developing the NHSA's Life Course Practice Network (LCPN) Outline, unveiling a brand new website, and seeking additional funding to carry out the work of Healthy Start.

Although we remain poised and "shovel ready" to realize the vision and mission of the NHSA, we will miss the leadership of Dr. Peter van Dyck, Associate Administrator of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), and Lieutenant Karen Hench, Interim Director, Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services.

We wish Dr. van Dyck the best in his upcoming retirement and extend gratitude for his leadership and commitment to the vision and mission of the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The families of MCHB have benefited greatly over the years from his commitment to optimize health outcomes for all.

Additionally, we wish Karen well in her departure/retirement from her MCHB tour of duty with hopes of her return in the near future as a civilian. We are most appreciative for Karen's advocacy, responsiveness, and belief in the work of the NHSA and its membership and constituents.

As the NHSA furthers our agenda of improving women's and infants' health, let us remain examples of the fact that the most anxious and fearful times can also be the most hopeful. Let us continue to live the belief of Rudolf Steiner, 19th Century Australian philosopher, social thinker, and architect, when he said: "A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living."

Moving Forward,

Estrellita "Lo" Berry, President  
NHSA Board of Directors



## SUMMERTIME

### Relax and Rejuvenate

I have always said that summer is an ideal time for rejuvenation and rebirth. A time to take a step back from everything that is going on and get a fresh perspective on your environment. This summer is no different for NHTSA, but we are taking these summer months to increase our level of creativity and continue thinking outside of the box to bring you new tools.

Early in July we launched our biggest communication tool -- the new NHTSA website! We are loving our new website and hope you are too. If you haven't by now, please take an opportunity to visit the new web address -- [www.nationalhealthystart.org](http://www.nationalhealthystart.org). It is vibrant, easier to navigate, and shows the faces of the families being served by Healthy Start projects. It was very important to us that we not only made this website user friendly, but that it was also representative of who we are and what we stand for. This was probably our biggest feat and accomplishment because, we knew how important it was to YOU. Huge kudos goes to Elizabeth Perry for all of her hard work in developing the site. We are adding features regularly to further improve the site and make it even more useful for you.

NHTSA continues to be creative this summer by developing a new communications tool to help you promote infant mortality awareness this September. As you host your events and talk with the public about infant mortality, we

have created a handy card that gives a quick overview of the issue. You can use it as a stand-alone marketing piece, a leave behind item or as part of the Celebrate Day 366 toolkit. However you decide to use it, we hope you find it useful in your organizations and communities. We've also created a NIMAM web badge that you can post on your websites and link directly to the NIMAM page on NHTSA's website. The site provides a wealth of information about how you and others can promote the issue.

In partnership with the Academy of Pediatrics, NHTSA is excited to announce a new resource guide for Healthy Start to address the social emotional development of children with the families they serve. This colorful 16-page booklet gives a detailed overview of social emotional development, guidelines for how Healthy Start staff can talk to parents, and tips for parents to use when engaging their children. Copies of the booklet will be sent to Healthy Start projects within the next couple of weeks.

The **20 Years in the Making: The Healthy Start Stories** publication will also be released soon, and we thank you for responding so quickly to our request. This publication will provide a great overview of NHTSA's work over the years, as well as give detailed profiles of Healthy Start projects. As other NHTSA 20th Anniversary activities emerge, we will be

sure to share widely. Please provide us with your 20th Anniversary and/or NIMAM activities so that we may share with others.

I hope that you will enjoy these last few weeks of summer, and take time on your own to relax and rejuvenate. As always thank you for your continued support as we work on your behalf.

Stacey D. Cunningham, MSW, MPH  
Executive Director

# NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

## Overview

The mission of National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children with involved, responsible, and committed fathers. As the premier fatherhood renewal organization in the country, NFI works in every sector and at every level of society to engage fathers in the lives of their children.

NFI is the #1 provider of fatherhood resources in the nation. Since 2004, through FatherSOURCE, its national resource center, NFI has distributed over 5.7 million resources. Additionally, NFI has trained over 7,600 practitioners from over 3,500 organizations on how to deliver programming to dads.

NFI is also the most quoted authority on fatherhood in America. Since 2009, NFI has been mentioned in over 1,200 news stories and makes regular appearances in national media to discuss the importance of involved, responsible, and committed fatherhood.

## Three-e strategy

NFI accomplishes its mission through a three-e strategy of educating, equipping, and engaging.

### Educating

NFI educates all Americans, especially fathers, about the unique and irreplaceable role that fathers play in their children's lives. In 1997, NFI began the first-ever, national public service advertising campaign promoting responsible fatherhood, in conjunction with the Ad Council. Over the life of the campaign, it received over \$500,000 in donated media, really putting the fatherhood issue "on the map" nationally. NFI has continued those public education efforts to this day, most recently with its "Be a Dad" television spot.

NFI is also the leading producer of research on the causes and consequences of father absence. Its flagship research product, Father Facts, now in its sixth edition, has

become the resource of choice for government officials, the media, and others who care about fatherhood. NFI has also conducted three national surveys on Americans' attitudes about fatherhood and marriage.

### Equipping

NFI can best be described as a capacity builder that helps organizations around the nation more effectively serve fathers with its evidence-based, research-based, and tested fatherhood programs.

NFI's primary capacity-building activity has been as the #1 trainer of organizations and facilitators interested in supporting fathers; NFI has trained over 7,600 practitioners from over 3,500 organizations on how to deliver high-quality programming to dads.

NFI has produced a portfolio of high-quality fatherhood skill-building materials that now include over 100 distinct resources – CD-ROMs, brochures, resource kits, curricula, and more. As the #1 provider of fatherhood resources in the country, NFI has distributed over 5.7 million resources to organizations around the country serving a diverse set of fathers, including incarcerated and reentering fathers, new and expectant fathers, and military fathers.

### Engaging

NFI understands that the work to connect fathers to their children, heart to heart, cannot be accomplished without partnerships. Therefore, NFI actively engages in partnerships across all sectors of society to deliver its messaging and programming.

NFI has partnered with organizations as diverse as the NBA, Head Start, FranklinCovey, The Salvation Army, FedEx, the National Healthy Start Association, and Parents as Teachers, to name a few.



**National  
Fatherhood  
Initiative®**

[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)

## The Father Factor in Maternal-Child Health

One of the areas in which NFI has designed specific programs and outreach is in the area of maternal-child health. Research shows that when fathers are engaged in the peri-natal period, mothers are more likely to seek pre-natal care, are less likely to smoke during pregnancy, are less likely to be depressed, and are more likely to breastfeed their baby. Babies are less likely to have a low birth weight, and infant mortality rates are nearly twice as low among babies whose fathers are involved.

To address this research, NFI has created curricula and other resource to equip organizations in the maternal-child health field to increase father involvement.

NFI's Doctor Dad™ curriculum is a research-based and tested program that organizations can use to increase the health literacy of fathers. It teaches dads child safety and healthcare for infants and toddlers.

NFI's Pocket Guide for New Dads™ is a resource kit that provides practical advice for new and expectant fathers, increasing their knowledge and confidence in their roles as new dads.

These resources and other NFI resources are used in many Healthy Start Home Visitation Programs (and other organizations in the maternal-child health field) across the U.S. to support father involvement.

➔ To learn more about National Fatherhood Initiative and the programs mentioned in this article, visit [www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org).



## THE MALE INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVE

### Where Dads Matter

**T**he Male Involvement Initiative Where Dads Matter (MI Cohort) is committed to honoring fathers, not only on Father's Day, but every day. We are committed to raising the positive perspective and attitude about fathers. Honoring and affirming fathers is one of the best kept secrets in our nation, our communities, and among Healthy Start projects. Some of the Healthy Start projects share their success stories with you here.

#### Healthy Start New Orleans

Healthy Start New Orleans has successfully partnered in an event at the Downtown Farmers' Market where fathers are featured



grilling fresh vegetables and making dishes with food items at the market. Traditionally Healthy Start New Orleans has partnered with Women, Infant and Children (WIC) and the local Farmers' Market vendors to put on this special Father's Day Family event. The event

is not only a lot of fun for all of those who participate, it introduces new venues to purchasing fresh fruits and vegetable and how to prepare meals in a healthy way for fathers.

#### The Omaha Healthy Start

Fathers for a Lifetime program hosts a community forum on the topic "Embracing Fatherhood in Our Community: We All Have a Part to Play." It is an interactive community discussion around the importance of identifying strategies to develop and promote a unified message that validates and advocates for fatherhood and father involvement. The speakers include an attorney with the Nebraska Legal Aid Society, a district court judge, and a representative from the Douglas County Mediation Office. These three speakers are familiar with and are committed to the work of improving father involvement and engagement.

#### Tulsa Healthy Start

The Fathers and Families Expo was held at the Tulsa Dream Center with more than 800

adults and children in attendance. A total of 30 vendors participated providing information, resources, lab testing, immunizations, and fingerprinting of children. Other vendors provided face painting, skits, magic shows, dance performances, and a drumline.



Additional community groups that participated included representatives from public safety, child protective services, and the health department. The event was a great success in providing information and fun to many in the community.

**Some of the stories are out,** but we know that there are others to be shared. We urge you to share your stories first in your community and then with the MI Cohort.

If you are interested in participating in the Male Involvement Where Dads Matter Cohort, please contact Ken Scarborough via email at [kscarborough@reachupincorporated.org](mailto:kscarborough@reachupincorporated.org) or call (813) 712-6320.

## TEXT4BABY SUMMER-SIGN UP CONTEST

**T**ext4baby is a free health text messaging service that provides information and resources for pregnant and new mothers. The text4baby program recently launched the Summer Sign-Up Contest, an opportunity for text4baby fans to spread the word about the service to friends, family, colleagues, patients, and other pregnant women and new moms who can use health tips and expert information. The top 20 contestants who enroll the most women in the text4baby service between now and September 10th will win a year's supply of baby products and a special gift, courtesy of text4baby's Founding Sponsor, Johnson & Johnson. To learn how to participate in the Contest, please visit [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org).



**OUR BLUEPRINT  
for the FUTURE:  
Building Healthy Families**

**13TH ANNUAL  
SPRING CONFERENCE**

**MARCH 11-14, 2012**  
HYATT REGENCY WASHINGTON  
CAPITOL HILL • WASHINGTON, DC

**ABSTRACT  
SUBMISSIONS WILL BE  
ACCEPTED BEGINNING  
IN AUGUST!**

Keep an eye out for your  
invitation to submit!

# SAVE THE DATES!

## Domestic Violence Training & Fall HSLTI

### Domestic Violence Training

NHSA is partnering with Futures Without Violence to hold a Domestic Violence Training October 18-19, 2011 in Atlanta Georgia. This is a wonderful opportunity for Healthy Start community health care workers, case managers and care coordinators (your front line staff). The training will explore how we can impact pre- and inter-conception care with consumers through an empathy and childhood exposure to violence framework as a way to address both domestic violence and parenting issues.

NHSA is able to fund ONE person from each project to attend. This will include NHSA paying for airfare, one night of accommodations on the 18th and breakfast and lunch on the 19st. We will be sending more detailed information on hotel logistics, meeting agenda, and the registration process in August.

### Fall Healthy Start Leadership Training Institute

Please mark your calendars for the next Healthy Start Leadership Training Institute! We look forward to hosting the Healthy Start project directors and staff November 3-4, 2011 at the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel in Raleigh, NC. When all details are finalized, you will receive information on location, hotel reservations and the application process.

The fall session will tentatively include the following tracks:

- **Track 1: Healthy Start Strategies for Success**
- **Track 2: Leadership Practices for Managers**
- **Track 3: Grants from A to Z**
- **Track 4: Meeting Leadership Challenges with Inspiration**
- **Track 5: Developing Community-Based Leaders & Sustaining & Growing a Healthy Start Program**

This will also be a great opportunity for you to meet and network with other Healthy Start project directors and staff, as well as the NHSA Staff. For questions or more information, contact Phyllis George at [pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org).

# SUMMER INTERN

This summer NHSA has a 6 week intern named Yi Ran. She studies business administration in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She joined NHSA to help implement our mission and vision so as to enlarge the influence of the Healthy Start Program.



A hard-working and creative young woman, Yi Ran has worked tirelessly since her first day. Apart from performing basic administration work, she also helps in marketing NHSA including selecting and updating website materials and gathering information for the Infant Mortality Awareness Campaign. By studying information on NHSA, Healthy Start projects and additional MCH organizations, she has come to a deeper understanding of the important work of Healthy Start and tries very hard to apply her academic knowledge to her work for NHSA. She is very pleased and feels honored to work with the staff at NHSA to promote the development of community-based maternal and child health programs.

We, the staff, have been thrilled to have Yi Ran in the NHSA office. She has made great contributions to our work, and we will miss her greatly when she returns to her studies. We wish her the best of luck in her continued education at the university in Hong Kong!

# NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED!

The National Healthy Start Association (NHSA) is pleased and excited to announce the launch of our brand new website at [nationalhealthystart.org](http://nationalhealthystart.org)!

The new site provides great functionality, improved navigation, and more information so that we may better serve you. This site helps make clear the organization's purpose and direction. It also spells out NHSA's enhanced [Mission & Vision](#), as outlined in our recently released [2011-2014 Strategic Plan](#).



The site features an eye-catching design with a user-friendly navigation system that allows viewers to quickly find the information they need. [Including Infant Mortality Awareness](#) resources, a searchable database of [Healthy Start Projects](#), and the most current [news in MCH](#), the website will capture the purpose and dedication of the NHSA members and friends, and draw visitors in to learn more.

We're also thrilled that all of the photos on the site are of Healthy Start consumers and staff! Thanks to all who have submitted pictures; please continue to send them our way.

We hope you will enjoy exploring the new site as much as we've enjoyed creating it for you!

# CONSUMER SPOTLIGHT

Stan Huddleston

**S**tan Huddleston, 23, and his significant other, Heather, live in Williamsburg, Kentucky and have one child together, Lillie, who celebrated her 2nd birthday in January. Stan has been an active participant in the Voices of Appalachia Healthy Start since July 2009.

At the time of enrollment, Heather and Stan's daughter, Lillie, had just been discharged from one of the local children's hospitals. She is a very special little girl. Born eight weeks early and weighing in at just 4 pounds, 14 ounces, Lillie has experienced many problems associated with her prematurity, as well as several other gastrointestinal issues. Overcoming surgery and many other medical setbacks while still just an infant, they have faced many obstacles and complications and come out a much stronger, determined, and connected family.

Having a baby with special needs is a full-time job for this mom and dad. Stan gave up working to be at home with Lillie, who needs constant care and supervision. With therapists and nurses around 24/7, Stan became educated very quickly on how to take care of Lillie, who needed both a colostomy, as well as a feeding tube.

While Healthy Start has learned a lot from this family, they've tried to pitch in and help the family as well. Transportation was a big issue. RTEC, who was providing transportation to all of Lillie's doctor's appointments, has a regulation that only one parent can accompany a child during transports. With all of the medical equipment and supplies needed, it was critical that both parents be able to attend doctor's appointments. Stan's Healthy Start caseworker contacted RTEC and



Heather, Stan and baby Lillie

worked with their family's pediatrician to get approval for both parents to accompany Lillie to the doctor. Stan's caseworker also worked alongside them to get the paperwork and other materials needed to apply for Lillie's Medicaid and Social Security, as well as helping with clothing and diapers through Healthy Start donations.

Not only does Stan help to take care of Lillie's medical needs, he is just like any other dad. He loves to play with Lillie and watch her reactions. His outreach worker says, "You can definitely tell that she loves her dad. She lights up when he comes near her."

Lillie has improved by leaps and bounds over the past 12 months, and, while she still faces many more obstacles, things are definitely looking up. Stan says that he is very grateful to Healthy Start for all their help and continued support. "My Healthy Start workers are very nice and helpful. We can always count on Healthy Start." Voices of Appalachia Healthy Start looks forward to many more years with Stan and his family and hope that Lillie will continue with her outstanding progress.

continued from page 1

**The Baby Deck™** The Baby Deck™ has 54 essential tips to help expecting moms (and women who may become pregnant soon) have a healthy pregnancy. Each card has a message explaining steps to take before, during, or immediately after pregnancy. You can tailor your Baby Deck™ for your Healthy Start project. For more information, call Ikenna Okezie at 703-232-1444 x1 or e-mail [ikenna@healthtank.com](mailto:ikenna@healthtank.com).

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please send us information using [the form](#) on our website on the NIMAM events you have planned or are planning to attend in September, so that we can help get the word out and support your endeavors. In addition, please be sure to send us your NIMAM successes (after the event) with photos, so that we can include them in our NHA Newsletter. For questions or more information, please contact Phyllis George at [pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org) or 202-296-2195 x102.

## Our many thanks for your hard work in strengthening our families and communities!

The Celebrate Day 365...Every Baby Deserves a Chance Infant Mortality Awareness Campaign supports and empowers parents from around the nation to take action in support of the Healthy People 2020 goal to improve the health and well-being of women, infants, children and families. Help the National Healthy Start Association celebrate babies being borned the first year of life and be part of the generation that ensures that every baby has a chance.

To take their first step. To say their first word. To graduate from college. To become President. To Celebrate Day 365.

**What is infant mortality?**  
Infant mortality is the number of infants who die during their first year of life. It has remained the same for many years, but in the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births in a given year. The Infant Mortality Rate is currently projected as a measure of the general health and well-being of a population.

**How does the United States compare to the world?**  
In 2002, the United States had the highest infant mortality rate in the world. The United States ranked 30th in the world in infant mortality, behind most European countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and Japan.

**Infant Mortality Statistics**

- The infant mortality rate in the United States is 7.0 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.
- With 13.4 deaths per 1,000 live births, African Americans have the highest infant mortality rate among all ethnic and racial groups. **African Americans are 2.4 times as likely to die as infants as compared to non-Hispanic white infants.**
- Socioeconomic disparities are also apparent across race. This was most evident in Utah counties. In that state, the infant mortality rate for African American mothers with over 12 years of education was almost three times that of non-Hispanic white mothers in 2002.
- In 2002, the leading causes of infant mortality were congenital anomalies, disorders related to immature (premature) growth and underdeveloped weight (small size), and respiratory complications.
- According to a report released by CDC in 2006, the smallest and most premature babies have an increased risk of infant mortality. More than 2% of babies... those of babies born before 32 weeks of pregnancy... about 10% more than that of the average.
- Studies have also shown a documented increase in infant deaths. One study found that 4 women who gave birth to very low birth weight babies were 100% likely to have experienced a fetal death compared to women who had normal weight babies.

Download this Fact Card at [www.nationalhealthystart.org](http://www.nationalhealthystart.org).

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



## Members of House and Senate support Healthy Start

Our annual appropriations letter in support of Healthy Start have been delivered to the Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate in preparation for upcoming debate on the funding bill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The letters recommended level funding of \$105 million for Healthy Start in fiscal year 2012. NHTSA would like to especially thank Congressman John Yarmuth of Kentucky and Congresswoman Karen Bass of California for sponsoring the House letter and Senator Debbie Stabenow of Michigan for sponsoring the Senate letter.

As you are well aware, this is an extremely challenging fiscal environment. Leaders in the House have pledged to cut 13% from the Labor/HHS/ED appropriations bill compared to last year's level. NHTSA will continue to work with our champions on Capitol Hill to protect our program.

### Signers of House letter

John Yarmuth of Kentucky  
 Karen Bass of California  
 Raul Grijalva of Arizona  
 Mazie Hirono of Hawaii  
 Marcia Fudge of Ohio  
 Bob Filner of California  
 Gwen Moore of Wisconsin  
 Judy Chu of California  
 Dennis Kucinich of Ohio  
 Steve Cohen of Tennessee  
 John Conyers of Michigan  
 Bobby Scott of Virginia

G.K. Butterfield of North Carolina  
 Earl Blumenauer of Oregon  
 John Lewis of Georgia  
 Elijah Cummings of Maryland  
 Mike Doyle of Pennsylvania  
 Jason Altmire of Pennsylvania  
 Wm. Lacy Clay of Missouri  
 Michael Capuano of Massachusetts

### Signers of Senate letter

Debbie Stabenow of Michigan  
 Carl Levin of Michigan  
 Kirsten Gillibrand of New York  
 John Kerry of Massachusetts  
 Kay Hagan of North Carolina  
 Bernie Sanders of Vermont  
 Ron Wyden of Oregon  
 Dick Durbin of Illinois  
 Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut  
 Barbara Mikulski of Maryland  
 Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia  
 Jeff Merkley of Oregon  
 Charle E. Schumer of New York  
 Tom Udall of New Mexico

If one of your Senators or Representatives signed one of the letters, please take a moment to send the staff an email of appreciation. As always, you can contact Jon Terry for assistance.

## Congress Already Behind on FY2012 Appropriations Process

Congress is slowly working its way through the 12 appropriations bills that fund the federal government. The House Appropriations Committee has not yet released a draft of the Labor/HHS/ED bill, which contains funding for Healthy Start and all programs within the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. Congress will not complete action on these bills in time for the start of fiscal year 2012 on October 1, 2011. Please stay tuned for 'Policy Alerts' from NHTSA that provide additional details on the appropriations process and implications for Healthy Start programs.

### August Recess

All Members of the U.S. House and Senate will be on recess during the month of August. Please use this as an opportunity to meet with your Member of Congress and update him or her on your work. This is a perfect time to explain the impact of Healthy Start and explore opportunities to raise awareness about infant mortality during Infant Mortality Awareness Month in September.

### Policy Webinars

NHTSA regularly holds policy webinars and conference calls to update project directors on policy developments in Washington, DC. The last webinar was held on June 15 and over 40 individuals participated in the call. These webinars provide convenient and simple ways to learn about NHTSA's public policy agenda and discuss opportunities to take action in support of programs that serve disadvantaged pregnant women and families. The next webinar will be held in September. An alert will be sent to NHTSA membership when an exact date and time are confirmed.



# RESEARCH NEWS – FAST FACTS & HOT STATS

## Women's Health & Fitness Day

**W**omen's Health & Fitness Day is the nation's largest annual health promotion event for women of all ages. The next event is set for Wednesday, September 28, 2011, and, in the future, it will be held on the last Wednesday in September. This unique national program focuses attention on the importance of regular physical activity and health awareness for women. Women's Health & Fitness Day will also be part of a new National Women's Health & Fitness Week, to be held annually the last week in September.

On Wednesday, September 28, 2011, more than 1,600 groups across the country will host women's health and fitness events at senior centers, hospitals, health clubs, park and recreation districts, local health and service organizations, schools, retirement communities, houses of worship, and other community locations. An estimated 80,000 to 100,000 women are expected to participate in these local activities.<sup>1</sup>



In spite of the importance of women's health, problems still exist in American women's health conditions. Women are disproportionately more likely than men to be affected by certain critical health problems including mobility impairments and chronic health conditions such as asthma, arthritis, or depression. Women are less likely to be physically active and are more likely to be obese.<sup>2</sup> Disparities related to

gender and race continue to exist in the United States.

"A woman's health is her total well-being, not determined solely by biological factors and reproduction, but also by effects of work load, nutrition, stress, war and migration, among others" (van der Kwaak, 1991)<sup>3</sup>. Women's Health & Fitness Day provides local organizations throughout the U.S. a unique opportunity to raise health awareness for women and encourage more women to regularly exercise. Promotion activities including workshops, healthy talks and health fairs are efficient and powerful tools to promote the importance of women's health as well as the benefits of physical exercise. More importantly, group activities like running, cycling, and hiking will offer women great opportunities to experience to get fit and get healthy.

Individual women are also encouraged to join Women's Health & Fitness Day.

Each one of you can join this great event by taking part in activities such as jogging, bicycling, rowing, and swimming. Each of these offers great benefits to improve the health of your heart and lungs and strengthen your muscles and bones. More importantly, it is not necessary for you to go to a gym to do physical activities. Small activities like taking the stairs instead of the elevator or doing housework such as gardening and floor mopping will help you fit exercise into your daily life.



### References

1 <http://www.fitnessday.com/women/index.htm>

2 the National Center for Health Statistics (cdc.gov/nchs).

3 van der Kwaak A, et al. 1991. Women and health. *Vena Journal* 3(1):2-33.

➔ **For information on Women's Health Day and how you can spread awareness in your communities, please contact Patricia Henze, Program Manager, National Women's Health & Fitness Day (phone:1-800-828-8225 or email: [info@fitnessday.com](mailto:info@fitnessday.com)).**

# mark your calendars!

## august

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org)

National Immunization Awareness Month [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam/default.htm)

### 1-7

World Breastfeeding Week [www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org](http://www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org)

## september

National Infant Mortality Awareness Month

Please fill out [our form](#) and send us what activities/events your project is planning to commemorate the month, so that we can spread the word. [info@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:info@nationalhealthystart.org)

### 12

National Healthy Start Association briefing at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. This event will highlight the effectiveness of the Healthy Start Initiative within the last 20 years. Contact NHSA for more details.

### 17-20

CityMatCH Urban MCH Leadership Conference: Justice, Parc 55 Wyndam, San Francisco, CA, Please visit [http://www.citymatch.org/conf\\_index.php](http://www.citymatch.org/conf_index.php) for more information.

### 21-24

Congressional Black Caucus 41st Annual Leadership Conference: iLead/iServe, Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, DC. Please visit <http://www.cbcfinc.org/alc-2011.html> for more information.

## october

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month [www.nbcam.org](http://www.nbcam.org)

Sudden Infant Death Awareness Month [www.firstcandle.org](http://www.firstcandle.org)

### 3

Child Health Day [www.mchb.hrsa.gov](http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov)

### 18-19

NHSA Domestic Violence Training, Hyatt Regency Atlanta, Atlanta, GA.