



# getting off to a Healthy Start

## SPRING CONFERENCE 2010 RECAP

### IN THIS ISSUE

- 1  
Spring Conference 2010  
Recap
- 2  
Message from the President
- 3  
Greetings from the National  
Office!
- 4  
Partner's Corner: text4baby
- 5  
Legislative Update
- 6  
Healthy Start in the News
- 7  
Consumer Spotlight: Johanne  
Lerick
- 7  
HS Leadership Training  
Institute Spring 2010 Recap
- 10  
Research News – Fast Facts  
& Hot Stats: Childhood Obesity
- 11  
Mark Your Calendars

This past March, close to 500 participants traveled to Washington, DC to attend the National Healthy Start Association's 11th Annual Spring Conference. Healthy Start Staff, MCH professionals, NHSA partners, as well as the babies and families of Healthy Start, all came together at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill to increase their knowledge of the current issues related to maternal and child health advocacy and practice. The theme was "Fulfilling Our Vision: Healthy Babies from the Start," and there were 20 workshop sessions that provided a spectrum of topics related to men, women and children for all attendees

Special thanks to the chairpersons, Judith Hill and Alma Roberts, along with the SC2010 Planning Committee and Subcommittees who helped to plan a successful conference. The feedback has been positive and we welcome your comments/suggestions that will assist us in making the future conference even better. Please visit <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22AF2JTYWYG> to complete our online overall evaluation survey.

#### Conference Highlights:

- Fitness guru, Bridget Smith started each day off with a heart thumbing workout session called Relax Your Mind, Recharge Your Body, and Revive Your Soul
- Tonya Lewis Lee, Richard David, Michael Lu and Yolanda Padilla headlined the conference with a plenary on The Impact of Race on Birth Outcomes: Examining the "Now What?"
- The documentary, "Crisis in the Crib: Saving Our Nation's Babies," was shown and followed with a panel discussion with Tonya Lewis Lee (the director) and the Office of Minority Health Preconception Peer Educators.
- John Schlitt, Director of the Pew Home Visiting Campaign of the Pew Charitable Trusts,



From left: Rise Ratney, Tonya Lewis Lee, Cynthia Dean and Belinda Pettiford

gave a brief overview on the future of home visitation and how it will affect Healthy Start

- Dr. Peter Van Dyck, HRSA/MCHB Associate Administrator and Mary Wakefield, PhD, RN, Administrator, Health Resources and Services Administration provided remarks to conference attendees and an MCHB update.
- Male involvement was again an important focus at the conference with a luncheon plenary ("It Takes Two to Tango: Defining the Role of the Expectant Father") of panelist Willie Parker, Ronald Warren and Jermaine Bond led by Kenneth Scarborough, Male Involvement Coordinator.
- The Kellogg Infant Mortality & Racism Action Learning Collaborative was highlighted with a panel of Healthy Start staff who presented their involvement with the project and lessons learned.

### SAVE THE DATE!

NHSA 12th Annual Spring Conference  
March 6-10, 2011

Hyatt Regency Washington on  
Capitol Hill  
Washington, DC

FOR MORE PICTURES, SEE PAGES 8-9

**Estrellita "Lo" Berry**  
President  
Central Hillsborough Healthy Start  
Tampa, FL

**Lisa L. Derrick**  
Vice President  
South Phoenix Healthy Start  
Tempe, AZ

**Corrina Jackson**  
Secretary  
Healthy Start and MATCH  
Tulsa, OK

**Risë Ratney**  
Treasurer  
Northwest Indiana Healthy Start  
Hammond, IN

**Alma Roberts**  
President Elect  
Baltimore City Healthy Start, Inc.  
Baltimore, MD

**Cynthia Dean**  
Past President  
Missouri Bootheel Healthy Start  
Portageville, MO

**Yvonne Beasley**  
Indianapolis Healthy Start  
Indianapolis, IN

**Jean Craig**  
Kansas City Healthy Start  
Kansas City, MO

**Mario Drummonds**  
Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership  
New York, NY

**Cindi Garcia**  
Healthy Start Laredo  
Laredo, TX

**Judith M. Hill**  
Omaha Healthy Start  
Omaha, NE

**Lisa Matthews**  
Cleveland MomsFirst  
Cleveland, OH

**Tamela Milan**  
Westside Healthy Start  
Chicago, IL

**Charlotte Parent**  
Healthy Start New Orleans  
New Orleans, LA

**Claudia Peña**  
Luna County Healthy Start  
Deming, NM

**Mahseeyahu Ben Salassie**  
Johns Hopkins Medicine  
Baltimore, MD

**Cheryl Squire Flint**  
Healthy Start, Inc  
Pittsburgh, PA

**Susan Wilson**  
Healthy Babies Program  
Wichita, KS

**Penny Womeldorff**  
West Virginia Healthy Start / HAPI Project  
Morgantown, WV

**Kimberlee Wyche-Etheridge, MD**  
Davidson County Public Health Department  
Nashville, TN

**Stacey D. Cunningham, MSW, MPH,**  
Executive Director  
scunningham@nationalhealthystart.org

**Phyllis George, MPH,** Program Manager  
pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org

**Elizabeth Perry,** Executive Assistant  
eperry@nationalhealthystart.org

**Contributing writers:**  
Jon Terry, President, Capitol Youth Strategies, LLC  
Lauren Sogor, text4baby  
Marie Carmen Jocelyn, BHSI Case Manager,  
Mattapan Community Health Center, Mattapan, MA

**Photographs:**  
Mattapan Community Health Center  
McMillan & Company Photography

**Editor:**  
Phyllis George  
**Assistant Editor:**  
Elizabeth Perry

Design by Middour & Nolan Design

The National Healthy Start Association  
Phone: 202-296-2195 • Fax: 202-296-2197 E-mail:  
info@nationalhealthystart.org  
www.healthystartassoc.org

The National Healthy Start Association is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. Its mission is to promote the development of community-based maternal and child health programs, particularly those addressing the issues of infant mortality, low birth weight and racial disparity.

# message from THE PRESIDENT

## Greetings Healthy Start Family and NHTSA Network,

I want to express how honored and humbled I am to have been selected to serve as your President. I especially want to thank the NHTSA Board of Directors for their vote of confidence. My commitment is to serve you with the utmost integrity and enthusiasm. I am grateful for the opportunity to team with our elected cabinet members, Alma Roberts (President Elect), Lisa Derrick (Vice-President), Corrina Jackson (Secretary) and Risë Ratney (Treasurer). The Board of Directors and the NHTSA Staff are excited and eager to move this great organization forward, expanding upon our successes and minimizing our challenges.

To my predecessors, Cynthia Dean and all past Presidents, you have left a solid foundation on which I am privileged to build upon. We will continue to take great strides in moving NHTSA forward, assuring that the membership is solidly grounded in our rich history while remaining committed to inclusiveness, authenticity, transparency and accountability. Together, we will expand our reach by developing formal and informal partnerships with those of like mind and commitment. During these very hard times for many of the people that we know, love and serve, we will continue to develop, perfect and implement strategies that showcase our strengths and competencies, making certain that our funders and other supporters know that we can verify our assertions about our effectiveness.

As we move forward, I enthusiastically commit myself to leading the Association in increasing our visibility across the nation, particularly in effectively telling our Healthy Start Story. As NHTSA's proud members, we will work together without self-centeredness or egotism to:

- Influence policy and practice in maternal child health arena
- Leverage additional funding (i.e. home visitation for our projects)
- Build our capacity for research and evaluation with scientific rigor



I believe it is our season to dream BIG and be assertive in realizing our vision of NHTSA's position as a recognized leader in and advocate for reducing, and eventually eliminating, infant mortality and perinatal disparities as well as the hub for MCH programs and services. The Healthy Start family is poised to seize opportunities to promote the development of community-based MCH programs via consumer involvement, community mobilization and male involvement, but it will take all of us. It will take all of us to assure that NHTSA is at the forefront of the movement for health equity for the persons we are privileged to serve. We will not be content until all our constituents have a fair opportunity to attain good health and no one is disadvantaged from achieving good health.

I look forward to all of us assisting our Association in becoming all it needs to be to ensure a healthier start for babies and families.

Thanking you in advance,

Estrellita "Lo" Berry, President  
NHTSA Board of Directors

greetings from

## THE NATIONAL OFFICE

**F**unny how time flies when you're having fun!! It is amazing to me, how quickly a year goes by. I looked up the other day and saw that it was April 6th. Wow, where did the time go? It was just a year ago, when I stepped through the doors of this office and began as the Executive Director for the Association. My emotions ranged from excitement to anxiety. Would I be successful? What would I do first? So many questions and ideas were spinning around in my head, but I knew it would all come together, and it did.

This has been a busy but incredible year. I arrived with a focus on strengthening our infrastructure, rebuilding old partnerships and creating new ones, and increasing the visibility of the work of Healthy Start programs. I feel really good in knowing that I achieved what I set out to do. We have a full, functioning staff at the Association who is knowledgeable and committed to this work. Our relationships with the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs, CityMatCH, the Office of Minority Health, the Joint Center for Economic and Political Studies, and the March of Dimes have only strengthened through our collaborations on a variety of current projects. New partnerships were formed with a number of organizations including: the National Head Start Association; American Academy of Pediatrics; National Birthing Project; Administration for Children, Youth and Families; Pew Home Visiting Campaign; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Reproductive Health; and Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition. Recognizing that social marketing is the wave of the future, we created a venue for Healthy Start Projects to tell their stories through the NHTA blog – Healthy from the Start. In addition, we are connecting Healthy Start projects to our national partners who are interested in collaborations with these communities. Lastly, we enhanced our advocacy efforts by providing projects with quarterly webinars that educate them about legislative issues impacting Healthy Start families, as well as provide them with tools to help them tell their stories on Capitol Hill.

We also had some great accomplishments this year with both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate passing resolutions in September to support efforts to reduce infant mortality in the United States – the first time ever that both passed infant mortality resolutions in the same year. Also, in March, 25 U.S. Senators and 25 Members of the U.S. House signed onto an appropriations letter in support of increased funding for Healthy Start in the amount of \$120 million. We ended our year with a successful and well attended Annual Spring Conference – over 500

individuals registered including approximately 100 families!

While we made great strides this year, there is more work to be done. We thank you for all of your efforts and commitment to improving the health and well-being of families. We know that with your help and continued support, NHTA will carry on our vision to be the kind of organization we strive to be for families in this country. This is a hardworking staff, and we wholeheartedly believe in the mission of this Association. We remain steadfast in our commitment to the babies whose lives we are saving and to the moms and dads who do all they can to ensure their babies have a healthy life.



We look forward to another year with you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacey D. Cunningham'.

Stacey D. Cunningham, MSW, MPH  
Executive Director

## PARTNER'S CORNER:

Each year in the U.S., more than 500,000 babies are born prematurely and an estimated 28,000 children die before their first birthday. In response to this national public health crisis, the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB) is launching text4baby, a free mobile information service that provides pregnant women and new moms with information to help them care for their health and give their babies the best possible start in life.

Women who sign up for the service by texting BABY to 511411 (or BEBE in Spanish) will receive free SMS text messages each week, timed to their due date or baby's date of birth. These messages focus on a variety of topics critical to maternal and child health, including birth defects prevention, immunization, nutrition, seasonal flu, mental health, oral health and safe sleep. Text4baby messages also connect women to prenatal and infant care services and other resources.



Text messaging represents an enormous yet untapped channel for delivering vital health information to those who need it most. Over 1.5 trillion SMS text messages were sent in the U.S. in 2008, with texting use higher among women of childbearing age. The text4baby initiative includes a robust evaluation led by The George Washington University with potential to demonstrate the impact of text4baby, and mobile health technology more broadly, on maternal and child health.

**Text4baby Partners.** Text4baby is made possible through a broad, public-private partnership that includes government, corporations, academic institutions, professional associations, tribal agencies and non-profit organizations. Founding partners include HMHB, Voxiva, CTIA - The Wireless Foundation and Grey Healthcare Group (a WPP company). Johnson & Johnson is the founding sponsor, and premier sponsors include WellPoint, Pfizer and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield. U.S. government partners include the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense Military Health System. The mobile health platform is provided by Voxiva and free messaging services are generously provided by participating wireless service providers. Implementation partners include BabyCenter, Danya International, Syniverse Technologies, Keynote Systems and The George Washington University. MTV Networks is a media sponsor.

**Outreach Partners.** The National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition is working with a broad range of partners to encourage the women they reach to take advantage of this free service, including the National Healthy Start Association, an early partner in these efforts. Outreach partners have access to text4baby



graphics and art files, have their name listed on the text4baby websites and in select communications, and can receive bulk orders of free posters while supplies last. In addition, HMHB is sending out a Welcome Packet containing a sample of our 4 posters to all the Healthy Start projects. Anyone who would like additional posters and other materials can contact NHSA and will be able to purchase them online soon at <http://text4baby.org>. If you'd like to learn more about how your organization can become an Outreach Partner, contact HMHB at [partners@text4baby.org](mailto:partners@text4baby.org).

**About HMHB.** HMHB is a recognized leader and resource in maternal and child health, reaching an estimated 10 million health care professionals, parents and policymakers through its membership of over 100 local, state and national organizations. HMHB was founded in 1981, prompted by the U.S. Surgeon General's conference on infant mortality. Six lead organizations established the informal coalition to improve the quality and reach of public and professional education related to prenatal and infant care, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, March of Dimes, American Academy of Pediatrics, Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the U.S. Public Health Service.

### Healthy Start in the News

**Has your Healthy Start project been in the news lately? Send links to newspaper articles, TV news stories or radio and TV PSAs to [info@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:info@nationalhealthystart.org) so they can be shared with your fellow members.**



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## 25 U.S. Senators and 25 Members of U.S. House Sign Letter in Support of Healthy Start

NHSA is extremely pleased to report that 25 U.S. Senators and 25 Members of the U.S. House signed onto an appropriations letter in support of increased funding for Healthy Start. The letter, delivered to the Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate, requests \$120 million in funding for the Healthy Start program. Healthy Start is currently funded at \$105 million. A list of the 25 Senators and 25 House Members who signed the letter are found at the bottom of this update.

Last year, 19 Senators signed the Senate letter and 19 House Members signed the House version of the letter. The additional signatures this year are directly attributed to the time spent on Capitol Hill during the NHSA Spring Conference in March. Conference participants, including Healthy Start project directors, staff and consumers, participated in literally hundreds of meetings on Capitol Hill and encouraged federal lawmakers to sign the letter.

An email sent to NHSA from Senator Debbie Stabenow's staff stated, "We got a total of six more signatures on the Healthy Start letter this year. Many of the Congressional offices mentioned how persuasive your advocates were in their Hill visits, so the credit should really go to them!" Senator Stabenow of Michigan and Senator Bond of Missouri were the two Senators who organized and spearheaded the letter in the Senate and Congressman John Spratt of South Carolina led the effort in the House. This letter of support represents the very first step in the appropriations process, but is an extremely important way to show the Appropriations Committees that Healthy Start has strong support and deserves to be strengthened and expanded.

NHSA will be sending a short letter of appreciation to all Senators and Representatives that signed the letter. A reminder to Healthy Start projects, if you see your Senator or Representative listed below, please take a moment and send their office a short note. Contact Jon Terry if you would like assistance or require additional information ([jon.terry@capitoloyouth.com](mailto:jon.terry@capitoloyouth.com), 202-558-6582).

### Senators:

Sen. Sherrod Brown (Ohio)  
Sen. Tom Udall (New Mexico)  
Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (New York)  
Sen. Russ Feingold (Wisconsin)  
Sen. Jeff Bingaman (New Mexico)  
Sen. Ron Wyden (Oregon)  
Sen. Chris Dodd (Connecticut)  
Sen. Richard Durbin (Illinois)

Sen. Chuck Schumer (New York)  
Sen. John Kerry (Mass.)  
Sen. Frank Lautenberg (New Jersey)  
Sen. Robert Menendez (New Jersey)  
Sen. Roland Burris (Illinois)  
Sen. Al Franken (Minnesota)  
Sen. Jeff Merkley (Oregon)  
Sen. Daniel Akaka (Hawaii)  
Sen. Arlen Specter (Pennsylvania)  
Sen. Jay Rockefeller (West Virginia)  
Sen. Bob Casey (Pennsylvania)  
Sen. Barbra Mikulski (Maryland)  
Sen. Carl Levin (Michigan)  
Sen. Tim Johnson (South Dakota)  
Sen. Ben Cardin (Maryland)  
Sen. Kit Bond (Missouri)  
Sen. Debbie Stabenow (Michigan)

### House:

Rep. John Spratt (South Carolina)  
Rep. Raul Grijalva (Arizona)  
Rep. Michael Capuano (Massachusetts)  
Rep. Gene Greene (Texas)  
Rep. Mazie Hirono (Hawaii)  
Rep. Rush Holt (New Jersey)  
Rep. Bobby Scott (Virginia)  
Rep. Steve Kagen (Wisconsin)  
Rep. Dennis Moore (Kansas)  
Rep. John Yarmouth (Kentucky)  
Rep. Steven Cohen (Tennessee)  
Rep. George Butterfield (North Carolina)  
Rep. Kathy Castor (Florida)  
Rep. Jason Altmire (Pennsylvania)  
Rep. Pete Stark (California)  
Rep. Michael Burgess (Texas)  
Rep. Stephen Lynch (Massachusetts)  
Rep. Dennis Kucinich (Ohio)  
Rep. Elijah Cummings (Maryland)  
Rep. Diana DeGette (Colorado)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Rep. Gregory Meeks (New York)

Rep. Danny Davis (Illinois)

Rep. Vern Ehlers (Michigan)

Rep. Bob Filner (California)

Rep. Andre Carson (Indiana)

### Prevention and Public Health Fund

NHSA is extremely pleased that the health care reform law includes \$500 million in fiscal year 2010 for a Prevention and Public Health Fund. This funding must be spent on prevention and wellness programs authorized by the Public Health Service Act, such as Healthy Start. On April 21, 2010, Stacey Cunningham sent a letter to the Honorable Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The letter to Sebelius stated:

*NHSA strongly urges you to include no less than \$25 million (5% of the Fund) to strengthen and expand existing Healthy Start programs and expand the Healthy Start model of prevention into communities that are eligible for funding but are currently unfunded. Recognizing that the \$500 million must be obligated by September 30, 2010, the nation's network of 102 Healthy Start coalitions stand "shovel ready" to act quickly and effectively to ensure this funding is used for outreach, case management, health education, perinatal depression screening, interconceptional care and other effective approaches to reduce infant mortality.*

The Fund will continue to grow each year, eventually reaching \$2 billion in fiscal year 2014 and each year thereafter.

### Funding for Home Visitation Programs

The new health care law also provides \$100 million in fiscal year 2010 for states to implement evidence-based maternal, infant and early childhood home visitation programs. Grantees are required to measure improvement in maternal and child health, childhood injury prevention, school readiness and achievement, crime or domestic violence, family economic self-sufficiency and coordination with community resources. The first step in this progress will be for states to complete a needs assessment to identify communities that have few quality home visitation program and are at risk for poor maternal and child health outcomes. NHSA encourages Healthy Start projects to contact their state MCH office and learn how the state is planning to conduct the needs assessment.

## HEALTHY START IN THE NEWS

Please join NHSA in welcoming our new Board Members:

- Jean Craig, Kansas City Healthy Start
- Charlotte M. Parent, RN, MHCM, Healthy Start New Orleans
- Claudia M. Peña, Luna County Healthy Start
- Mahseeyahu Ben Selassie, MSW, MPH, ACSW, LCSW, Johns Hopkins medicine
- Cheryl Squire Flint, Healthy Start, Inc.
- Kimberlee Wyche-Etheridge, MD, MPH, Nashville Healthy Start

We also want to congratulate the newly elected officers for the Board of Directors (effective April 1, 2010):

- President – Estrellita Berry
- Vice President – Lisa Derrick
- President Elect – Alma Roberts
- Treasurer – Rise Ross Ratney
- Secretary – Corrina Jackson

## INFORMATION FOR HEALTHY START PROJECTS:

JOIN NHSA FOR OUR JUNE EVENTS!

PROJECT DIRECTORS' MEETING  
June 4, 2010

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRAINING  
June 23, 2010

Please visit the following websites to register, view the agendas and get more information on hotel and travel arrangements.

- Project Directors' Meeting: <https://www.regonline.com/PD-Meeting>
- Domestic Violence Training: [https://www.regonline.com/DV\\_Training](https://www.regonline.com/DV_Training)

Questions? Contact Phyllis George at (202) 296-2195 or [pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org). Thank you.

See you in June!

## CONSUMER SPOTLIGHT: JOHANNE LERICK

Johanne Lerick, who was new to the United States, came to Boston Healthy Start Initiative (BHSI) at Mattapan Community Health Center when she was 8 months pregnant. At that time, she was unable to speak English and only had the support of her husband since no other family members lived in Boston. Since it was her first baby, she was very scared and shy.

As stated in its mission statement, Mattapan Community Health Center is committed to providing high quality, comprehensive, linguistically and culturally appropriate primary and preventive health care services for diverse populations that include prenatal care and other health care services for its patients. This work is clearly reflected in the services the BHSI team was able to provide for Johanne. Through extensive health care, support, education and referrals, Johanne delivered a healthy beautiful baby girl. Unfortunately, right after Johanne delivered, she went through a very rough time during which she lost her home, separated from her husband, and was pregnant with her second baby. The BHSI Case Management team doubled their efforts and helped her relocate, get vouchers for daycare and apply for food stamps.



One of Johanne's goals was to become a nurse. Through referrals from BHSI, she attended ESL classes, nursing aid school, and found her first job. When Johanne was preparing to enter nursing school, she became pregnant with her third child. Once again, she became a client but this time her pregnancy was not easy, because Johanne was suffering from chronic pelvic pain that resulted in her being unable to work. The BHSI team worked with other providers to monitor her health status and worked with the Immigration Department in order to get Johanne's mother a visa to come to the United States to help her out during this difficult time.

Now Johanne is about to deliver and her mother is here in the United States to help with the children. Johanne is now able to dream again because she will be able to reach her goal of going back to school for nursing. BHSI will continue to work with Johanne and her family to give support in order to reach

her full potential. Boston Healthy Start Initiative at Mattapan Community Health Center has embraced Johanne and she has become an active member of the BHSI and its client focused activities.

## HS LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE SPRING 2010 RECAP

The Spring Healthy Start Leadership Training Institute was a huge success! As the prelude to the Spring Conference, approximately 100 Healthy Start Project Directors and Staff traveled to Washington, DC to sharpen their leadership skills and network with others to Healthy Start staff. With feedback from the October HSLTI, we made changes to the curriculum of some of the tracks and once again offered "Grants from A to Z," which was attended by even more PDs. One person said, "This Leadership Institute was EXCELLENT! I have been working in the field for a long time, but I am new to Healthy Start. I feel that this training better equipped me to work with the consumers we service. I will definitely be back in the Fall!"

Special thanks to Kathryn Hall-Trujillo, MPH who was the keynote speaker on the first day. Kathryn is the Executive Director of the Birthing Project USA: The Underground Railroad for New Life in Albuquerque, New Mexico and she came to help to ignite and inspire attendees to continue to be leaders in their communities.

We are currently in the planning process for the Fall HSLTI. Once the date, location and track selections are finalized, we will be sending you the information, so that you can plan to attend.



Stacey Cunningham and Kathryn Hall-Trujillo

## THE NHSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE IS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR FAMILIES TO ENJOY TOGETHER



Jon Terry prepares Consumers for their visits to Capitol Hill.



On the final day of the Conference, Healthy Start staff and Consumers rally on Capitol Hill and visit with Members of Congress.



During a reception at the Senate Hart Building, Members of Congress and their staff are recognized for their support of Healthy Start. Above, Representative Steve Cohen (TN) is presented with an award.



## NHSA WAS GIFTED WITH FANTASTIC SPEAKERS THROUGHOUT THE CONFERENCE!



From Left: Dr. Yolanda Padilla, Alma Roberts, Dr. Richard David, Tonya Lewis Lee, Stacey Cunningham, Dr. Michael Lu, and Mirtha Beadle



Left: Dr. Mary Wakefield, HRSA Administrator

Right: Lo Berry, Dr. Peter vanDyck, HRSA Assoc. Administrator for MCH, and Stacey Cunningham



From Left: Dr. Jermane Bond, Roland Warren, Dr. Willie Parker, and Kenneth Scarborough



From Left: Dr. Patricia McManus, Charlene Smith, Carrie Hepburn, Brenda Thompson, Jerry Wynn, and Grace Kolliseuah



NHSA would like to thank our Volunteers for all their hard work!! Special thanks to Margaret Turner for heading up the Volunteer Committee. Margaret is pictured to the far left with some of the Registration Volunteers.



Fitness guru, Bridget Smith, and her early morning kickboxing class started each day.



In the Exhibit Hall: Infant MassageUSA and text4baby

# RESEARCH NEWS – FAST FACTS & HOT STATS:

## CHILDHOOD OBESITY

**Obesity risks start before birth:** Factors in prenatal and infancy may affect a person's future weight and health

One of every three children in the U.S. is overweight, but it's much easier to prevent obesity than to treat it [3]. Childhood obesity campaigns, such as First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" program are a good start, but some studies are showing that it may not be enough to prevent childhood obesity [2]. School and home



interventions focusing on nutrition and exercise are helpful and more attention is being paid in schools to improving lunches and encouraging physical activity, but in recent studies, researchers conclude that some risk factors for childhood obesity exist even before birth [4]. Too many overweight and obese children are showing signs of chronic illnesses, such as high blood pressure and early signs of heart disease by the time they are in school, which can cause poor health development in adult years.

Issues that should be targeted include excessive maternal weight gain, smoking during pregnancy and truncated breastfeeding. One study summarized more than one dozen factors in the prenatal period through age 5 that can increase the likelihood of later obesity [5]. Several risk factors likely begin with the mother, even before she's a mother. Almost half of U.S. women today begin pregnancy overweight or obese, automatically increasing the likelihood that their babies will be born either too small or too large, both of which increase the risk of obesity for the child later in life [3]. Further, studies show that how much weight a pregnant woman gains and whether she develops gestational diabetes both can influence her child's weight in adulthood [4].

In addition, there are several factors during the infancy stage. A newborn's weight is noted on birth announcements, memorialized on the first page of the baby book and never forgotten by his or her mother, but perhaps it's a baby's weight at age 1 that matters more [5]. Weight that is too high for the child's height (e.g. being at the 75th percentile for weight, but the 30th percentile for height) are cause for alarm. Also, whether a baby is breast-fed (and for how long) or bottle-fed, when it begins eating solid food and how much it sleeps have been linked to the risk of obesity [4].

Since childhood obesity is linked to both maternal and child health, obstetricians and pediatricians must be enlisted to address obesity prevention in their patients. During pregnancy and the first two years of life, mothers and their infants are seen by physicians more often than any other time of life [1].

It's a perfect opportunity for interventions, since we already have systems in place to reach mothers and children. Studies have shown that early interventions can potentially prevent the development of obesity in school-age children, along with associated health conditions [5]. Attempts are being made to address these critical periods, such as stop-smoking campaigns and the Institute of Medicine's stricter guidelines for pregnancy weight gain for obese women. The "Let's Move" campaign could synchronize its efforts more directly with these existing campaigns and try to ensure that the IOM recommendations are more widely known and followed by pregnant women [2, 5].



### References:

- 1) Healthy Children. Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents. <http://www.healthychildren.org/>.
- 2) Let's Move! America's Move to Raise a Healthier Generation of Kids. <http://www.letsmove.gov/>.
- 3) National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Healthy Youth. Health Topics: Childhood Obesity. <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/obesity/>.
- 4) Persons et al. "Does birth weight predict childhood obesity?" Vol. 57 (6): 409-410, June 2008.
- 5) Taveras et al. "Racial/Ethnic Differences in Early-Life Risk Factors for Childhood Obesity." Pediatrics, Volume 125 (4), April 2010.

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS

## May

- **National Physical Fitness and Sports Month**
- **National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month**
- **9-15:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will celebrate **National Women's Health Week** on May 9-15, 2010. In conjunction with this event, National Women's Health Check-Up Day will be held on May 10, 2010 to encourage women to use the many high-quality preventive care services available to them through the Nation's health centers. You can host an event during the week of May 9-15 or partner with local providers to offer women in your community free blood pressure checks, Pap tests and mammograms, diabetes and HIV/AIDS tests, and other important preventive services. Free promotional and educational materials are available at [www.womenshealth.gov/whw](http://www.womenshealth.gov/whw) while supplies last.

## June

- **1-2:** ICC-LC Meeting. Wardman Park, Washington, DC.
- **4:** Healthy Start Project Director's Meeting. Wardman Park, Washington, DC. **PROJECT DIRECTORS ONLY!**
- **21-23:** Head Start 10th Annual Research Conference. **Research on Young Children and Families: Launching the Next Decade for Policy and Practice**, Washington Marriott Wardman Park, Washington, DC. Please visit <http://www.esi-bethesda.com/HSRC/> for more information.
- **22-23:** NHTSA Domestic Violence Training – Healthy Start Projects **ONLY**.

## July

- **19-20:** UIC School of Public Health 20th Annual Maternal and Child Health Leadership Conference; Leadership, Legacy, and Community: A Retreat to Advance Maternal and Child Health Scholarship and Practice. Visit <http://www.uic.edu/sph/mch/> for more information.

## September

- **National Infant Mortality Awareness Month**
  - o Please send us activities/events your project is planning to commemorate the month, so that we can spread the word. E-mail [pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org)
- **11-14:** The 20th Annual CityMatCH Conference. Celebrate Urban Maternal and Child Health Leadership, Chicago, IL. Visit [http://www.citymatch.org/conf\\_index.php](http://www.citymatch.org/conf_index.php) for more information.