



Meet the new  
Director of the  
Division of  
Healthy Start  
and Perinatal  
Systems on  
page 16.

## IN THIS ISSUE

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Month	2
Research News: Infant Loss, SIDS/SUID Stats	3
Health Observances & Resources	4
Fatherhood	5
NIMAM at the Projects	6
Consumer Spotlight	15
New DHSPS Division Director & New NHSA Staff	16

Be sure to visit NHSA's Facebook page for the photo album with additional NIMAM photos. Click [here](#).



## Coming Next Month

Healthy Start Projects' happenings in October—and maybe a late arriving NIMAM story or two, as well!

## October is Another Month of Important Health Observances

September was National Infant Mortality Awareness Month (NIMAM). See how the Healthy Start projects recognized NIMAM starting on page 6. Among this month's observances are SIDS Awareness Month and Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Month. All three awareness months have a common theme: losing babies we can't afford and don't want to lose. They each take a different tack, each important and each worthy of our attention. In this issue, we will look at SIDS Awareness and Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Months, along with a couple of other important health observances.

### 2020 SIDS Awareness Month #SafeSleepSnap

In recognition of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness Month, the #SafeSleepSnap activity encourages safe sleep advocates and infant caregivers to come together on social media to share infant safe sleep images and messages, help make safe sleep practices the norm and celebrate the role all of us have in making sure our babies sleep safely every time they are put down to sleep.

Many organizations are joining in these efforts including Charlie's Kids, Cribs for Kids®, First Candle and the National Institute for Children's Health Quality. NHSA is posting information on our social media pages and each week we're sending out an e-blast about the theme for that week.

The American Academy of Pediatrics provides the following recommendations to prevent SIDS:

1. Back to sleep for every sleep. To reduce the risk of SIDS, infants should be solely on their back for every sleep until the child reaches one year of age.
2. Use a firm sleep surface. Infants should be placed on a firm sleep surface, e.g. a mattress in a safety-approved crib, covered by a fitted sheet with no other bedding of soft objects to reduce the risk of SIDS and suffocation.

1. Breastfeeding is recommended. Breastfeeding is associated with a reduced risk of SIDS. Ideally, mothers should breastfeed exclusively or feed with expressed milk for six months.
2. Have baby sleep in the same room as the parents. Baby can be close to the parents, but in a separate bed "...ideally for the first year of life, but at least for the first 6 months."
3. Keep soft objects and loose bedding away from the infant's sleep area. This reduces the risk of SIDS, suffocation, entrapment and strangulation.
4. Consider offering a pacifier at nap time and bedtime. Though the reason why is not clear, studies report that pacifiers have a protective effect on the incidence of SIDS, even if it falls out of the baby's mouth.
5. Avoid smoke exposure during pregnancy and after birth. Both maternal smoking during pregnancy and smoke in the infant's environment after birth are major risk factors for SIDS.
6. Avoid alcohol and illicit drug use during pregnancy and after birth. There is an increased risk of SIDS with prenatal and postnatal exposure to alcohol and illicit drugs.

Click [here](#) for the AAP's website with 13 more recommendations to prevent SIDS!

Additional source: [2020 SIDS Awareness Month/#SafeSleepSnap Digital Toolkit](#), accessed 10/04/2020.

## Getting off to a Healthy Start

### Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month: A Mother Speaks

October is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. Nearly one in four women will experience this type of loss during their lifetime. If you or someone you love has lost a baby to stillbirth, miscarriage, SIDS or any other cause, you know that the silence and stigma associated with this topic, as well as feelings of isolation, can greatly affect the experience. Among women who suffer a stillbirth, approximately 40% display symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; 30% will develop Major Depressive Disorder. In addition, there has been a significant spike in the number of pregnancy losses worldwide during COVID-19. October's focus on this issue carries meaning and purpose for many.



In 2002, my husband and I lost our first daughter, Sophie, who was stillborn at full term as a result of an umbilical cord accident. She is a much loved and vital member of our family, and continues to positively impact the world through the work I have been able to do as a part of honoring her legacy.

The initial period of time following Sophie's death was made more difficult by the lack of resources and other forms of support that were available at that time. Much progress has been made since then. There are two organizations I have been involved with over the years that have been extremely helpful: The TEARS Foundation ([www.thetearsfoundation.org](http://www.thetearsfoundation.org)) and The Star Legacy Foundation ([www.starlegacyfoundation.org](http://www.starlegacyfoundation.org)). The TEARS Foundation provides financial support for funerals and burials, as well as support groups and one-to-one mentoring. The Star Legacy Foundation also offers many forms of emotional support, and dedicates much of its efforts toward stillbirth prevention and research. This is timely, as there is currently a fair amount of new knowledge in the field. Another group that helps countless numbers is Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep ([www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org](http://www.nowilaymedowntosleep.org)). They provide phenomenal black and white remembrance photography to serve as an important step in the healing process for newly bereaved families, free of charge. These images validate the existence and presence of these precious babies by honoring their legacy. There are also many websites, social media pages and blogs available now that offer great comfort and support. Googling "baby loss" will lead to many helpful sites. In most states, a Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth (CBRS) allows parents to request a birth certificate for their baby, another very helpful and important validation of their existence. Some states that do not yet have this in place are working with their state legislatures to get a bill passed that will allow for this certificate.

#### *A few lessons learned...*

- Grief lasts as long as love lasts, which is forever. People move forward in their own time, carrying the loss with them.
- Bereaved parents experience an intense fear of their baby being forgotten. We need to hear their names, often.
- The vast majority of family and friends want only to somehow ease your pain, and are able to do so in a myriad of ways. Almost universally, however, people experience some awkward words of condolence, or "wisdom" which is less than helpful. People are nervous, upset for you and doing their best. I learned to look past the words to the underlying intent.
- Choosing to have another baby does not diminish the experience or memories of the baby you lost. That is something I had genuine concerns over and it simply didn't happen that way. Every child has their own place in your heart forever; one can never replace another.
- People have different ways of expressing and coping with grief and loss. It is crucial to honor this; out of respect and in the interest of preserving relationships with spouses, family, friends and others.

Pregnancy/baby loss is not an experience one should attempt to navigate alone. There are aspects which are very specific to this experience, and it helps immeasurably to spend time with others who have been in a similar situation. Promoting awareness during October increases the likelihood that families will receive the help and support they need, while also resulting in increased education and prevention efforts that may ultimately reduce the incidence of these tragedies.

Lisa Proehl

Mom to Sophie  
Advocacy Co-chair, Star Legacy Foundation,  
Washington (State) Chapter

#### Additional Grief Resources

- [First Candle](#)
- [The Compassionate Friends](#)
- [March of Dimes](#)
- [MISS Foundation](#)
- [Share Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support](#)

October 2020

## Pregnancy and Infant Loss: From the CDC

The loss of a baby during pregnancy remains a sad reality for many families. Learn what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is doing to understand the preventable causes of stillbirth.

### What is Stillbirth?

A [stillbirth](#) is the death of a baby before or during delivery. Both miscarriage and stillbirth describe pregnancy loss, but they differ according to when the loss occurs. In the United States, a miscarriage is usually defined as loss of a baby before the 20th week of pregnancy, and a stillbirth is loss of a baby at 20 weeks of pregnancy and later.

### How Many Babies Are Stillborn?

About one pregnancy in 100 at 20 weeks of pregnancy and later is affected by stillbirth and each year about 24,000 babies are stillborn in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

### What Can Be Done?

The causes of many stillbirths are unknown. Stillbirth occurs in families of all races, ethnicities and income levels and to women of all ages. But there are things that a woman can do before and during pregnancy to increase her chance of having a healthy baby:

- Be sure that medical conditions, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, are under control before and during pregnancy.
- Avoid smoking cigarettes during pregnancy.
- Strive to reach and maintain a healthy weight before pregnancy.



Each year about 24,000 babies are stillborn in the United States.

CDC works to learn more about who might have a stillbirth and why. CDC tracks how often stillbirth occurs and looks at the causes of stillbirth. Knowledge about the potential causes of stillbirth can be used to create recommendations, policies and services to help prevent stillbirth.

To learn more about CDC's activities, visit the [Stillbirth CDC Activities page](#).

<sup>1</sup>MacDorman MF, Gregory EC. Fetal and perinatal mortality: United States, 2013. National vital statistics reports: from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System. 2015; 64(8):1-24.

Source: [Pregnancy and Infant Loss](#), accessed 10/11/2020.

## Data and Statistics for SIDS and SUID: From the CDC

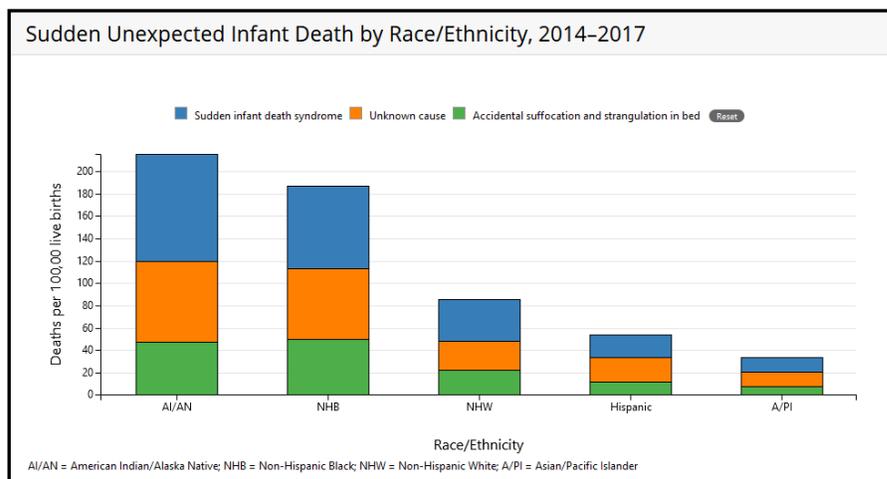
Each year, there are about 3,500 [sudden unexpected infant deaths \(SUID\)](#) in the United States. These deaths occur among infants less than one year old and have no immediately obvious cause.

The three commonly reported types of SUID include the following:

- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Unknown cause.
- Accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed.

In 2018, there were about 1,300 deaths due to SIDS, about 1,300 deaths due to unknown causes, and about 800 deaths due to accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed.

Sources: [Data and Statistics for SIDS and SUID](#) and [Sudden Unexpected Infant Death by Race/Ethnicity, 2014-2017](#), both accessed 10/11/2020.



## Getting off to a Healthy Start

### More October Health Observances

#### National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (NDVAM) is designed to unify women and men all across the world who have been victims of domestic violence (DV). DV crosses every status, culture, religion and race. According to a CDC survey, 20 Americans experience intimate partner physical violence every minute, resulting in around 10 million victims every year. DV “was already an epidemic before COVID-19, but the health crisis has caused a tremendous spike in incidents of abuse,” says [NOMORE.org](#). “Even as lockdown restrictions are lifted, the abuse will not simply end. It remains a critical time for survivors, and greater awareness, education and bystander intervention are desperately needed. This October, join us in activating bystanders and sharing information that can help those who are experiencing violence during this unprecedented time.”

#### Four Signs Someone is Experiencing Abuse

1. Their partner threatens or tries to control them.
2. The partner controls their money.
3. The partner isolates the victim.
4. The partner physically abuses the victim.

#### How to Observe NDVAM

1. Participate in an event. The [Domestic Violence Awareness Project](#) and other organizations will hold events throughout the month. Participate even if this issue doesn't directly impact you.
2. Take the [#1Thing community pledge](#) to stand up to DV, speak up against bullying, listen to victims and work to change one thing in your community to end DV.
3. Post on social media. Head to the [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) to find sample posts to use on social media, including resources and toolkits you can share with your followers.

Additional source: [National Domestic Violence Awareness Month—October 2020—National Today](#), accessed 10/04/2020.

#### Health Literacy Month

Health Literacy Month (HLM) is when organizations and individuals can promote the importance of useable and understandable health information.

[National Today](#) says that “According to studies, more than 40 percent of Americans have difficulty obtaining, processing and understanding basic healthcare information — which is necessary for making informed decisions. Lack of healthcare



literacy can seriously hamper global healthcare efforts.”

#### How to Observe HLM

1. Submit a “[Health Literacy Hero](#),” which can be an individual, teams or organization that identifies health literacy problems and acts to solve them.
2. Join the [Health Literacy Solutions Center](#) to find and share resources, learn and grow, network with one another, discuss and debate and get and stay connected.
3. Check out [The Health Literacy Month Handbook](#) for more ideas of things to do!

Additional Source: [Health Literacy Month, October 1-31](#), accessed 10/04/2020.

### Resources You Can Use

#### COVID-19 & Pregnancy Updates

MotherToBaby has two studies of interest:

- [MotherToBaby COVID-19 and Pregnancy Study](#), led by researchers at UC San Diego, is an observational study evaluating whether COVID-19 during pregnancy increases the chance of birth defects or other adverse pregnancy or infant outcomes.
- [HOPE COVID-19 Study](#) is led by UC San Francisco researchers to investigate whether the coronavirus and factors such as stress and social distancing might impact the risk for adverse pregnancy outcomes or infant health.

They also have resources such as “COVID-19 and Breastfeeding” or “Your Questions During the Era of COVID-19.” Start [here](#) to check them out!

#### Office of Minority Health – New Blog on Women and Opioid Addictions

The CDC's Office of Minority Health and Health Equity has a new blog, *Promoting and Protecting the Health of Women: Saving Lives by Preventing Drug Overdoses*. “The narratives of women struggling with opioid and substance use disorders and those trying to find safe ways to manage pain are both heartbreaking and compelling. We all have a role in preventing substance abuse and encouraging conversations about how to reduce the prevalence of drug overdose in our nation. Click [here](#) to read the full blog.”

#### The Role Of Racial Justice In Building A Culture Of Health

A culture of racial injustice and a culture of health cannot coexist. Alonzo Plough and Gail Christopher share highlights from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's 2020 Sharing Knowledge forum, which focused on racial injustice and health. [Read More.](#)

## How CAMPAIGNful Politics Impact Us and Our Children

“The spectacle of our local, state and national elections plays out for the entire world to see across myriad media outlets. That spectacle increasingly reminds me of the arcade game Whac-A-Mole, only renamed for our recent campaign seasons to *Whac-A-Pol*. I find myself wishing I had a virtual mallet to hit the candidates back into holes until they can behave in a manner worthy of a modicum of respect. Having become familiar with Zoom and other such platforms, I long to mute each candidate unless they focus on issues rather than personal attacks...

“The uncivil wars being waged by political candidates are dangerous to the psychological, emotional, moral and democratic development and wellbeing of our Nation’s children and youth. As a lifelong educator, parenting consultant, parent and grandparent, I am extremely concerned about lessons that impressionable youth are learning from candidates and pundits alike...

“To children and youth – and many adults – it may seem as if our choice is to vote for the *least bad* candidate because there is not a *best* one. If one listens to the propaganda spewing from certain candidates and their handlers, it is easy to feel that our choice has been limited to which dishonest scoundrel to elect. There must be guidance from adults on [how to spot such misinformation](#) in real time so that our children gain the whole, truthful picture.

“That said, one of the few bright spots for me in this process has been the recent young voter (18- to 29-year-olds) turnout. For example, [youth turnout](#) in the 2018 midterm election was at a 100-year high. As voting is the cornerstone of our democratic process, [this is a hopeful sign](#) – and this mirrors the similarly encouraging signs of [youth engagement in other issues](#) directly affecting our and our planet’s survival.

“After consideration of their maturity and emotional development, I think children and youth *should* be able to watch regular campaign spectacles...**but only if accompanied by a trusted adult willing and able to do these four simple things** to restore our civil senses and to encourage a new generation of voters:

1. Acknowledge and validate kids’ perceptions that the negative rhetoric from the candidates is often undignified, inappropriate, hurtful and increasingly dishonest – especially when displayed by adults seeking to represent and lead our country.
2. Encourage discussion about the meaning of “public service” and the specific qualities required for humane leadership. Identify individuals, including peers, teachers and others in our daily lives, who possess those qualities.
3. List specific behaviors and actions each of us can take to demonstrate respect for others, even if we do not agree with all their views and ideas.
4. Be mindful of and vigilant about our own behaviors around children and youth as our passions intensify during the remaining days of this election season.

“To bring some dignity back to our democratic process, perhaps we should allow the innate optimism and fairness traditionally associated with childhood to influence our attitudes and behaviors as we countdown to Election Day and beyond. Then, maybe we will feel more confident about once again holding ourselves up before the world as a moral and democratic beacon for others to follow. We also will be able to better honor the founding ideals of our nation and future elections can be less *campaignful*.”

Source: [Daddyng blog: How CAMPAIGNful Politics Impact Us and Our Children](#), by Allan Shedlin, used with permission.



Credit: AP Photo/Robert F. Bukaty, Portland, ME, Climate Strike 2019.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Third Thursday of every month at 1:00 p.m. ET: NHTSA Fatherhood Practitioners Webinars.** Healthy Start Project Directors, please make sure we have your Fatherhood Coordinator in our database so they receive notices about the webinars. Send name and email address to [Hida Reese](#) and/or [Bea Haskins](#).

## Getting off to a Healthy Start

### National Infant Mortality Awareness Month at the Healthy Start Projects



Challenged by COVID-19, the Healthy Start grantees nevertheless found creative ways to get the message out about infant and maternal mortality. NHTA is honored to share *NIMAM at the Projects* with you!

We've included as many photos as possible and created a new album on our Facebook page with the rest of the October photos; click [here](#) to see it. You'll know if a project has photos in the album when you see the Facebook icon by a project's name. Check them out! And keep sending those stories and photos to our newsletter editor at [bhaskins@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:bhaskins@nationalhealthystart.org)!

#### Dallas (TX) Healthy Start



#### Screen captures from the Series!

Dallas Healthy Start's Infant Mortality Webinar Series, *Closing the Equity Gap through Education, Advocacy and Support*, featured three consecutive Friday sessions with two presentations each day. Continuing Education hours were provided for Nurses, Social Workers and Community Health Workers.

September 11<sup>th</sup> – Debra Gerner Thompson, "Promoting Safe Sleep for Infants: Minimizing the Risks" and J'Vonnah Maryman, "From Clinic to Community: Multiple Approaches to Addressing Birth Inequity."

September 18<sup>th</sup> – David B. Nelson, "Understanding Maternal Mortality Data & the Importance of Extended Maternal Care After Pregnancy" and Terri Major Kincaid, "The Root Causes of Perinatal Health Disparities: Roadmap to Implementing Change: A Health Equity Lens."

September 25<sup>th</sup> – "Mothers Table Talk: Panel Discussing Birthing Experiences" with Torrial Jackson, Tamaya Bailey, Shauna Davis, Zytreaa Doyle, Taelor Brown and Junie Mosely; Charles Dillon presented on "Fatherhood: Teaming up to Address Myths, Dismantle Barriers and Deconstruct Walls."



↓ Karamoko Andrews, LCSW, Dallas Healthy Start Program Director, speaking to the disparities in healthcare.

↑ The title screen for the web series. ↓ David B. Nelson, MD, Chief of Obstetrics, Parkland Hospital Dedman Family Scholar in Clinical Care Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine.



→ Kiara Baskin, Certified Doula and Lactation Counselor at Strong Beginnings.



#### Strong Beginnings – Healthy Start (Grand Rapids, MI)

Strong Beginnings – Healthy Start sent in two links to share!

First is a link to an American Hospital Association podcast on the Strong Beginnings program titled "Advancing Health: Eliminating Disparities in Birth Outcomes." Click [here](#) for the podcast.

The second link is to an article featuring Strong Beginnings – Healthy Start's Bonita Agee on Black Women Breastfeeding. The Doula Program Manager mentioned, Kiara Baskin, is a former Strong Beginnings Community Health Worker. Click [here](#) for the article.

October 2020

## NIMAM at the Healthy Start Projects, continued

### Healthy Birth Initiative (HBI) (Multnomah County, OR)



Generations Collaborative, they worked with the Multnomah Board of County Commissioners to proclaim September as Infant Mortality Awareness Month. This [link](#) takes you to an article about the proclamation event. See also the screen shot above. The proclamation can be seen next to the HBI logo.

HBI reported on four, count 'em, four happenings!

1. HBI celebrated National Breastfeeding Month and Black Breastfeeding Week in August by partnering with the Multnomah County Health Department REACH program to offer a series of six webinars on breastfeeding in the Black community. HBI facilitated two of the webinars, *Black Men for Breastfeeding* and *Breastfeeding for the Love of the Community*. "The response was excellent and the entire series was a success," said HBI's Ronnie Meyers.
2. HBI's Male Involvement Initiative continued their twice-monthly events, Dad Talk and Black Dads Read. In September, Dad Talk focused on infant and maternal mortality and the role of dads and other men in supporting the family's health. VaSheeta Charles, HBI Community Health Nurse, was the guest speaker; other HBI staff attended and participated.
3. HBI's CAN focused on NIMAM in partnership with the Multnomah County Maternal Child and Family Health Services. With their community partner, Future

### Healthier Moms and Babies/Own Your Journey (Fort Wayne, IN)



Own Your Journey was created to address the health and wellness of women during their pre- or inter-conception phase of life as a way to create better birth outcomes including lower infant and maternal mortality by improving women's wellbeing before becoming pregnant. OYJ is a nine-week health and wellness program that focuses on various topics that address overall health including physical health, healthy eating and weight, meal planning, mental health, financial management, goal setting, family planning and more. Each group consists of 8-12 women ranging from mid-late teens to early 30's. As of last week, the OYJ program successfully graduated 13 women from the program! Healthier Moms and Babies will keep in touch with these women for one year to provide them with support and encouragement to keep working towards their goals. OYJ has two new group sessions starting again on October 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.



**Healthy Start Projects!**  
Send us photos and stories for *Getting off to a Healthy Start!* It's a great way to spread the word about what your project is doing!  
Send to [Bea Haskins](#).

#### If Your Project Changes Project Directors...

...Please be sure to let NHTSA know so we can update our records. Send the new project director's name and email address, along with the name of the previous PD, to [Bea Haskins](#) and/or [Hida Reese](#).

## Getting off to a Healthy Start

### Healthy Start Projects Recognize NIMAM, continued

#### MomsFirst (Cleveland, OH)

In honor of National Infant Mortality Awareness Month, MomsFirst held a photo contest with the following categories:

- Breastfeeding Champion—a photo of mom breastfeeding her baby or baby enjoying a bottle of breastmilk or baby “helping” with the breast pump.
- Beautiful Bump—picture of an expectant mom.
- Safest Sleeper—photo of baby following the ABCs (alone, back, crib) of safe sleep.
- Ready Reader—photo of baby with a book or of someone reading a book to the baby (Daddy & Me, Mommy & Me).
- MomsFirst Model—picture of baby wearing a MomsFirst t-shirt or holding an item with the MomsFirst logo.
- Fabulous Family—photo of a MomsFirst family/extended family/people who love the baby.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

BUT

WAIT,

THERE'S

MORE!



→ On Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, one of MomsFirst provider sites, Friendly Inn Settlement House, hosted several voter registration and census events at seven different locations throughout their service area. MomsFirst served boxed lunches, gave out MomsFirst water bottles and had volunteers to assist with voter registration and the Census. The events garnered 113 new or updated voter registrations!



October 2020

## NIMAM Activities at the Healthy Start Projects, continued

### Delta Health Alliance Healthy Start (Greenwood, MS)



Pink and blue pinwheels—312 in total—marked the number of female and male infants who lost their lives in Mississippi in 2018. Delta Health Alliance (DHA) partnered with Greenwood Leflore Hospital and other groups on September 25<sup>th</sup> to bring attention to infant mortality. “Our goal is to raise awareness to reduce maternal and infant morbidity and mortality,” said Vanessa Wilson of DHA’s Healthy Start Collaborative. “September is Infant Mortality Awareness Month and the Healthy Start team had several drive-through events in different counties to help educate people to protect our newborns.”

↑L to R: Latia Davis, Robert Love, Cheryl Jones, Gloria Wilson and Vanessa Wilson.



### Heart of Georgia Healthy Start (Dublin, GA)



On September 18<sup>th</sup>, the Yazoo County Infant Mortality Awareness event, hosted by the Delta Breastfeeding Coalition, was a tremendous success. Through partnerships with Mississippi State Extension, Tulane Missionary Baptist Church, Magnolia Health/Ambetter, Mississippi Department of Health WIC, Mississippi Tobacco-Free, Mallory Clinic and Delta Diaper Bank, DHA can better serve those in need.

↑ Pictured from the right: Chelsea Presley and volunteers.

#### Did You Know...

...that NHSA has a Career page on our website? There you can find job postings with NHSA, when available, as well as “additional job postings.” Those are job postings from agencies other than NHSA. They might be from Healthy Start projects or their grantee agencies or from other organizations that want to reach our audience. Click [here](#) for the Careers page.

Send the information you want posted for a job to [bhaskins@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:bhaskins@nationalhealthystart.org). Be sure to include a deadline.

Heart of Georgia held its Infant Mortality Awareness Empty Stroller Walk on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. They walked from their office to the Laurens County City Hall. Heart of Georgia Healthy Start staff, along with partner agencies, clients and community leaders participated in the event. The

Community Service Board of Middle GA, the program’s Community Mental Health Agency, donated diapers to their clients.

Check out this month’s [album](#) on NHSA’s Facebook page, where you can see the article about the Empty Stroller Walk in their local newspaper!

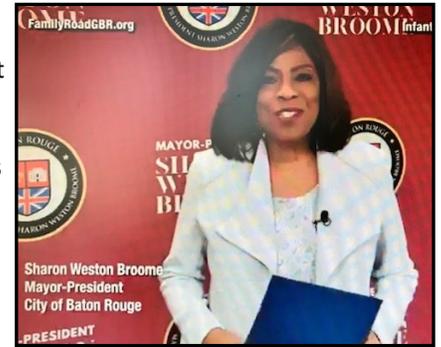
Getting off to a Healthy Start

NIMAM Activities at the Healthy Start Projects, continued

Family Road Healthy Start (Baton Rouge, LA) 

Family Road Healthy Start held two NIMAM activities. The first was the Family Road Infant Mortality Awareness Virtual Event on September 17th on Facebook Live. The event was hosted by Dena Christy, CEO and President of Family Road, along with Clay Young and Shelly Beal, who are both board members of Family Road. The event included video testimonials from a few of Healthy Start Moms and Dads, as well as from board members and community representatives sharing experiences and ways to continue support of Healthy Start program and services. Proclamations and Commendations were presented during the Family Road Healthy Start IMAM Virtual Awareness Campaign.

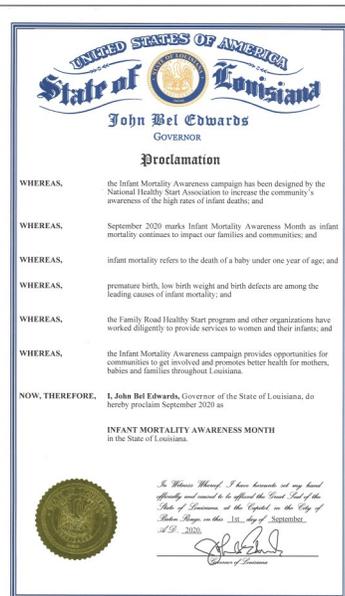
Dr. Dana Hunter, Executive Director of the Children’s Cabinet in the Governor’s Office, and a former Family Road participant when she was 17 years old, presented the proclamation for Governor John Bel Edwards and gave her personal testimony of the support and services she received as a Healthy Start client.   *Proclamation from Governor Edwards.*



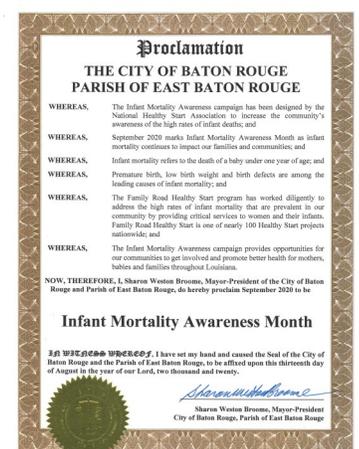
Michael Tipton of Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation presented Family Road with a \$25,000 check (↓) to increase Maternal and Child Health Awareness. *Holding the check are Dena C and Rochelle L.*



The last item to report was that Lamar Advertising Company donated digital advertising board space to Family Road Healthy Start for NIMAM! These digital board PSA’s ran during the entire month in locations throughout East Baton Rouge community. Below is the picture that was used.



↗ Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broom, City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish, presented a proclamation (→) and discussed the importance of Healthy Start and infant mortality rates in the community.



Also at the Facebook Live event, Louisiana State Senator Regina Ashford Barrow appeared with a video message to congratulate Family Road for two decades of work in maternal and child health in East Baton Rouge Parish.

The second event was Mommy and Daddy Virtual Hour on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The theme was Bringing Home a New Human Being, presented by Desiree Collins, East Baton Rouge Early Childhood Network and CAN member. The focus was the delivery of this fantastic new human being and the overall health of the family after the baby comes home. Some of the comments afterwards were, “Great conversation topic,” “Very informative” and the witty, “Very convenient, no problems with parking!”

Believe it or not, these are only a few of the photos Family Road submitted! Be sure to check our the rest in the October album on NHTSA’s Facebook page. Click [here!](#)

October 2020

## NIMAM at the Healthy Start Projects, continued

### Midlands Healthy Start (Columbia, SC)

Midlands Healthy Start (MHS) has answered the call year after year to educate, collaborate and strategize about reducing infant mortality in our community. To address infant mortality and other health disparities, MHS sponsored "EMPOWER" 2020, a Virtual Educational Symposium. The event opened with a presentation from the project's evaluator, Dr. Jihong Liu, who presented a comprehensive overview on MHS. This year's event featured two tracks, one for providers who deliver care, which includes medical and other providers, and one for participants in the community.

Topics for Providers were *Perinatal Mood Disorders* was presented by Dr. Stephanie Berg, Psychiatrist, Prisma Health, Behavioral Care Day Treatment and *Maternal Mortality and Morbidity* was presented by Dr. Sherri K. Taylor, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Maternal Fetal Medicine, with Prisma Health-USC Medical Group. Topics for Participants were *Benefits of Breastfeeding During a Pandemic* was presented by Kristine S. Wilson, Women's Health Case Manager/Educator/Lactation Consultant, Tandem Health (Sumter, SC) and *Pregnancy and Caring for Young Children During a Pandemic* was presented by Michelle Flanagan, Obstetric Educator, Richland Hospital Perinatal Systems.

State of South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster's Proclamation 7 was shared during the event along with photos of Midlands Healthy Start program participants and recent program graduates.

During September, MHS also provided education to program participants on infant mortality, SIDS and Safe Sleep. Throughout the month, MHS staff checked on participants and their babies to ensure that safe sleep practices were being incorporated with every sleep. A Safe Sleep contest was completed allowing participants to show off their babies in safe sleep situation and the winners were displayed in the monthly Safe Sleep class on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

Two more things to report: Virtual birthing sessions are being held monthly to educate moms on breastfeeding basics, including the benefits of breastfeeding, positions, feeding cues, proper handling and storage of breastmilk and dispelling breastfeeding myths. MHS has also created a virtual "Chat with the Nurse Practitioners" to allow participants an opportunity to ask medical questions and educate them on various topics. Septembers topics focused on viruses and preventive measures to reduce the incidence of contracting and spreading the illness.



### Missouri Bootheel Regional Consortium/ Missouri Bootheel Healthy Start (Sikeston, MO)



On September 18, 2020, MBRC virtually hosted its 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Low Birthweight Learning Collaborative Workshop. There were a total of 144 participants. The workshop featured local, state and national speakers. Presentations included a *Welcome Video* from Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO); *National Healthy Start Association-Infant Mortality Awareness*, presented by Deborah Frazier, CEO; *The Impact of Low Birth Weight Babies*, presented by Paul Caruso MD-FAAP; *Strategic Approaches to Address Racial Inequities in Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes*, presented by Katrice D. Cain, MA; *Healthy Mothers, Healthy Communities: Supporting Maternal Wellness in Rural Communities*, presented by Susan Kendig, JD, WHNP-BC, FAANP and *Reaching Women Through Health Information Technology: The Gabby Preconception Care System*, presented by Jack Brian MD, MA.



Click [here](#) for the workshop program that contains the speaker bios, new baby arrivals, upcoming events and more. And here is the [link](#) for the workshop recording, which is available for anyone who would like to view it!

**Reminder:** Advocacy is a year-round project. Take every opportunity you have to educate your Members of Congress, as well as your **state and local legislators**. Invite them to your events, including virtual ones like the ones described in this issue. Take photos. Send them the NHTS newsletter when their photo appears; they love seeing that!

## Getting off to a Healthy Start

### NIMAM Activities at the Healthy Start Projects, continued

#### Family Tree Healthy Start (Lafayette, LA)

Two activities to report:

Last month, Healthy Start visited their community partners in Lake Charles to provide a little relief for the destruction caused by Hurricane Laura. They delivered grocery bags for the employees of their sister organization, *Family and Youth*, as well as donated non-perishables, hygiene and cleaning supplies to the community distribution center at SWLA. "During these hard times, we stand together so that we may be Louisiana Strong," said Mayci Doucet, CAN Coordinator.

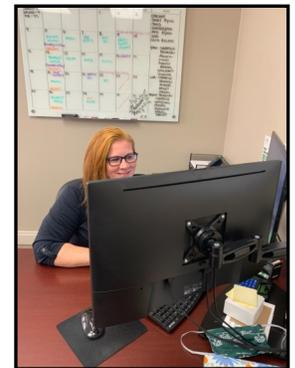
The Family Tree Healthy Start's first ever Maternal Mortality Summit was deemed a great success! The project partnered with the Louisiana Department of Health, Southwest Louisiana Center for Health Services and the Women's Foundation to host the free webinar held on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Some of the most popular sessions were "The High Risk Pregnancy," with Dr. Scott Barrilleaux and a panel of experts hosted by Dr. Kenneth Brown (retired OB/GYN), with panelists Ivy Sias (LPC specializing in Perinatal Mental Health), Ebony Smith (WHNP) and Kira Kana (midwife and owner of a local free standing birth house). Attendees appreciated Dr. Barrilleaux's candor and the panelists' great passion for creating a safer world for birthing women. "With over 250 people in attendance, we are one step closer to becoming a community that protects mothers from the dangers of maternal mortality," commented Doucet.



↑ *Heading to Lake Charles!*



↑ & → *Watching the Maternal Mortality Summit.*



#### Central Oklahoma Healthy Start Initiative (Oklahoma City, OK)



↖ *Participants in the Fishing with Dads event.*

↗ *Senator Anastasia Pittman serves snacks to the participants.*



↑ *Most Fish winner!*

More photos of the event are in the October album on NHTA's Facebook page. Click [here](#) to check them out!

Central OK Healthy Start held their 5th Annual Fishing with Dads event on October 3rd at Edwards Park Pavilion. The Healthy Start Team presented information on Safety, What's in the Water, Breastfeeding: How Dad Can Support, Men's Health and Infant Mortality education during the event. Each participant received a free fishing pole courtesy of Cabela's. Children won medals for catching the Biggest Fish, First Fish and Most Fish. This year, the event was opened up to include moms. Two local officials, City Councilwoman Nikki Nice (Ward 7) and State Senator Anastasia Pittman (48th District) attended.

The event was sponsored by Community Health Centers of Oklahoma's Central Oklahoma Healthy Start Initiative, Bryant Avenue Baptist Church, Cabela's, Disciples of Christ Outreach, Gideon Baptist Church, Greater New Zion Baptist Church, Infant Mortality Alliance (IMA), Integris, Mt. Triumph Baptist Church, OCCHD Wellness Now Coalition, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Plainview Baptist Church, Public Strategies, Senator George Young, Shiloh Camp, and TRUE Dads.

October 2020

## NIMAM Activities at the Healthy Start Projects, continued

### The Magnolia Project, and Initiative of the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition (Jacksonville, FL)



Florida House of Representative Tracie Davis (District 13) sponsored a Community Baby Shower on September 26<sup>th</sup>. This was the third event Representative Davis has sponsored in recognition of Infant Mortality Awareness.

The purpose of this drive-thru event was to celebrate and connect families, improve the health and well-being of women during their childbearing years and to address medical, behavioral, cultural and social service needs. Participants received food donated by Farm Store, as well as diapers, wipes, books, masks, personal items and baby items.

Co-sponsors included Lutheran Social Services, JAXPORT (Jacksonville Port Authority) and BEAM (Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry). "We were grateful to have volunteers, such as National AmeriCorps members, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Jax Gents and Certified Doula's and Lactation Counselors," said The Magnolia Project's Marsha Davis, Project Director.

### Florida Department of Health in Orange County, Healthy Start – Bellies, Babies and Beyond (Orlando, FL)



The Florida Department of Health in Orange County, Healthy Start's Bellies, Babies & Beyond program (BBB) hosted a virtual Baby Shower on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, during which a panel of experts addressed topics such as Safe Sleep, Choosing a Safe Caregiver, Shaken Baby Syndrome and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. "The attire, of course, was pajamas," said BBB's Program Director, Arthur D. Howell, III. "We played virtual games and the participants were very engaged during our Q & A session. We had 31 participants."

On September 10th, BBB launched their first virtual car seat classes. Car seat pick-up was on September 25th; this was also a certification event. Those who participated in the Baby Shower came to pick up their giveaway items as well, all via a drive-thru set up.

BBB also had a PSA (public service announcement) air on a local radio station, 98.5 The Wire. It gave safe sleep information and a phone number to call for more information.

↳ Screen capture from the virtual Baby Shower. ← Staffing the car seat pick-up event.

## Getting off to a Healthy Start

### NIMAM Activities at the Healthy Start Projects, continued

#### Bronx Healthy Start Partnership (NY)



Bronx Healthy Start Partnership (BxHS) held two NIMAM events. On September 18th, “Let’s Talk Vaccinations” was a Zoom discussion led by Laura Korin, MD, Chief Preventive Officer, BxHS. Dr. Korin explained a baby’s vaccine schedule and addressed misconceptions about vaccinations. She explained that scientific studies and research refuted the idea that misconceptions cause autism. Participants learned about required dosages and follow-up measures to ensure a child does not have a negative reaction to the vaccine.

On September 22nd, BxHS held its 2nd Annual “Strollin’ for Life” event to heighten awareness of the alarming rates of infant mortality in the Bronx. Bronx Community Board



↖ Vaccination event flyer.

↑ District Manager William Rivera.

← Assembly Candidate Shanequa Charles.

9 District Manager William Rivera welcomed participants by speaking about infant mortality and the need to take advantage of available health care programs. BxHS Director Alma Idehen then led a moment of silence and a balloon release to honor the infants whose lives have been cut short. Participants wore purple shirts with white lettering that read, “#BronxBabiesMatter.”



As the group strolled pushing empty strollers, they chanted “Every Baby Deserves...,” followed by an infant milestone, such as “...deserves to take their first step, have their first tooth” and so forth, followed by the response, “Bronx Babies Matter!” The event concluded with a moving and powerful speech from Shanequa Charles, candidate for Member of Assembly District 78. Back at the starting point, there were information tables and demos on safe sleep and more health and safety measures during COVID-19. “Anyone who came with a child or expressed a need was given a stroller to take home,” said Marcus McLarty, Study Coordinator at BxHS. “They were invited to sign up for additional support and resources at the Healthy Start and other Bronx MCH support programs.” Participating programs, in addition to BxHS, were Bronx Community Health Network & Morris Heights Health Center; Bronx Works Census Program; Bronx Health REACH Immigrant Health Project - Morrisania WIC Program - Urban Health Plan-Bronx Shine – NYC Department of Health COVID-19 Test & Trace project, Cardinal McCloskey Early Childhood Programs, and voter registration. For news coverage, click [BronxNet](#).

#### Cradle Cincinnati (OH)



Every September, Cradle Cincinnati celebrate the winners of their “Champions for Change” awards, held in recognition of Infant Mortality Awareness Month. This year, they celebrated ten Cincinnatians who have responded to a hard year by stepping up for women, moms and babies during COVID-19. Winners include doctors, community health workers, a home visitor, a patient navigator, a fire chief and an outreach director for a parish ministry. Each of these champions found creative solutions to connect families with needed resources and help women maintain a sense of community during a time of uncertainty. Champions were recognized by the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners during their weekly virtual meeting. “We are so thankful for our champions and the difference they are making in our community!,” said Cradle Cincinnati’s Jessica Seeberger. You can read about each champion at <https://bit.ly/2020CradleChampions>.

Seeberger also said they are excited to share that Brandi Rahim, Cradle Cincinnati Connections social worker and certified lactation counselor, was invited to join the NICHQ-Healthy Start breastfeeding cohort. In this group, she’s able to connect with Healthy Start peers and share ideas on how to engage with and educate community members on the importance of breastfeeding. According to Brandi, the group has already discussed the importance of engaging dads in breastfeeding and how Healthy Start sites have adjusted how they provide support virtually. Brandi’s enthusiasm has rubbed off on the rest of Cradle Cincinnati Connections – several team members are in training to become certified lactation counselors themselves! Brandi is excited to continue meeting with this group and use what she learns to help Cincinnati families reach their breastfeeding goals.

↑ Champions of Change flyer.

→ Brandi Rahim, social worker and certified lactation counselor.



October 2020

## One More Healthy Start Project Report & A Consumer Spotlight Story

### Georgia Strong Families Healthy Start Program (Columbus, GA)



↑ Materials for the September 12th WIC drive-thru clinic.

On September 24<sup>th</sup>, the GSFP-Valdosta site collaborated with their Community Action Network (CAN) partners, WellCare Care Management Organization, Wiregrass Technical College and the Georgia South Health District to host a drive-thru group connection. The topic of the group connection was *Providing a Safe Sleep Environment for Baby*. Families had the opportunity to drive by the GSFP Healthy Start office and see a demonstration of a safe sleep environment. While remaining safely in their cars, families also received gift bags that included journals, pens, face masks, toothbrushes for children, breast milk storage bottles and brochures about Healthy Start services and enrollment information. Eighty-three people attended the event and eight enrolled in the Georgia Strong Families Healthy Start Program.



↑ GSFP-Valdosta Team at the September 24 drive-thru safe sleep event.



### The Magnolia Project's (Jacksonville, FL) Consumer Success Story



Keashawna Mathis was referred by the Coordinated Intake and Referral team (CI&R) and enrolled into the Magnolia Project in January 2020. She was seven months pregnant at the time of enrollment and was living in a hotel room with her two children and their father. Ms. Mathis was the only one employed during the time and she was worried that she would give birth before finding stable housing for her family. She and her case manager, Rosa, started working immediately towards accomplishing the goal of finding an apartment. Mom worked very hard and was able to move in to her apartment just a few days before delivery.

Keashawna's case manager provided multiple resources to assist mom with finding furniture for her apartment. In addition, Ms. Mathis attended COVID-19 program sponsored events such as food and diaper giveaways.

The father of the children was also enrolled into the program at the same time. Currently, mom maintains stable housing, employment and her kids are healthy. She stated that she is thankful for the support provided by her case manager, Rosa, because the extra support helped her accomplish her many goals.



↖ Keashawna Mathis before the baby was born.

↗ Baby is growing up fast!

#### Send Us Your Stuff!

Send us your stories and photos by the 6<sup>th</sup> of each month for inclusion in *Getting off to a Healthy Start*. Send to [Bea Haskins](#).

## Getting off to a Healthy Start

### NHSA Welcomes New DHSPS Director



Lee Wilson has been selected as the permanent Director of the Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Services for the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, after serving as the Acting Director for the past nine months. Prior to taking this position, Mr. Wilson served as Senior Policy Advisor in the Bureau working to advance policies and programs that support maternal and women's

health, infant health and safety and children with special healthcare needs. He has made significant contributions through his work on the Women's Preventive Services Initiative, which ensures coverage of preventive services and screenings for women and on the design of the Bureau's maternal health programs.

Mr. Wilson began his work in HHS as a Presidential Management Intern at the National Institutes of Health, where he worked on the creation of the National Institute for Deafness and Communication Disorders (NIH) and on the Community Partnership Program to Prevent Substance Abuse (then ADAMHA). He moved to ADAMHA, now SAMHSA, where much of his work focused on advancing the use of evidence-based models in prevention and treatment programs. He developed the Agency's tobacco control program, mandating state enforcement of state laws prohibiting the sale of tobacco to minors. In 2006, Mr. Wilson moved to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, as Director of Public Health Services Policy. There, he led the development of the Essential Health Benefits requirements in the Affordable Care Act, the development of evidence-based guidelines for women's preventive services and screenings, and design elements of the Mental Health Parity and Addictions Equity Act. Following his work at ASPE, he moved to HRSA as the Associate Administrator for Regional Operations.

Mr. Wilson completed his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science at Gordon College and Master of Arts in Public Policy at Duke University. He was selected as an Atlantic Fellow by the British Council in 2002. He was presented in 2003 with the Freedom of the City of London. He and his partner live in Gaithersburg, MD.

Please join NHSA in welcoming Lee to this new position!

### New Staffperson Joins NHSA



Lauren Nunally is the new Clinical Implementation Manager for NHSA's AIM CCI grant (Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health Community Care Initiative). Lauren has enjoyed a rewarding career for 25+ years as a Registered Nurse and Midwife in both community low risk settings and high-risk metro birthing facilities. She was also instrumental in the successful development of Midwifery

Group Practices within a suburb of north-west London that served over 1000 women. Lauren has used her vast clinical experience coupled with quality improvement and implementation science to focus on health equity, maternal and child health, health policy and collective impact within the perinatal health space.

More recently, Lauren was the Perinatal Quality Coordinator with the Georgia Obstetrical and Gynecological Society where her priority was to collaborate with the Society's OB physician membership, federal, state and nonprofit organizations, labor and delivery units and other stakeholders to work on initiatives to address the increased incidence of maternal morbidity and mortality across the state. She has served on the Georgia Maternal Mortality Review Committee and as the Maternal Clinical Specialist with the Georgia Perinatal Quality Collaborative, facilitating program development and implementation to improve health outcomes for mothers and babies in the state of Georgia.

Lauren is the current chair of the Association for Women's Health and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) 2020 Public Policy Committee and also sits on various MCH committees. She regularly consults as a subject matter expert with various national and local organizations and frequently presents at conferences on topics relating to maternal mortality and morbidity and health inequities.

Lauren can be reached at [lnunally@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:lnunally@nationalhealthystart.org).



National Healthy Start Association | Raynard Washington, President | Deborah L. Frazier, CEO | 1325 G Street, NW, Suite 500 | Washington, DC 20005 | 202-295-2195 | [www.nationalhealthystart.org](http://www.nationalhealthystart.org)

The National Healthy Start Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The mission of the NHSA is to be our nation's voice in providing leadership and advocacy for health equity services and interventions that improve birth outcomes and family well-being.

**Newsletter Editor:** Bea Haskins, Communications Coordinator | **Contributing Writers:** Lisa Proehl, Allan Shedlin and Healthy Start Projects' Staff; **Photo Credits:** Thank you to the Healthy Start projects that sent in photos used in this issue!

**Notice:** Photos in this publication are the property of NHSA or the Healthy Start projects that submitted them and may not be copied, used or posted elsewhere, including websites or publications, without the express written permission of NHSA or the Healthy Start project.