



# GETTING OFF TO A HEALTHY START

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NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START ASSOCIATION

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## NHSA UPDATES

### Spring Conference

The NHSA 13th Annual Spring Conference, Our Blueprint for the Future: Building Healthy Families, was a huge success thanks to NHSA Staff, the SC2012 Planning Committee and help from the Board of Directors. Participants traveled to Washington, DC to attend. When we selected this year's theme, we wanted to capture the spirit of Healthy Start and build on the great work we have been doing for the last 20 years for families. The result was a conference full of wonderful workshops and energizing plenaries! Please browse our [conference photos](#) or [view the slideshow](#) on the web.

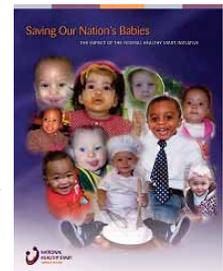
NHSA hopes you'll join us as we begin to plan for our 14th Annual Conference, April 6-9, 2013 here in Washington, DC!

### Evaluation Work Group

The Healthy Start Evaluation Work Group was created by the National Healthy Start Association in February 2011 to address the need for establishing the Healthy Start design as an evidence-based model. Since that time, the Work Group has diligently met each month to create minimum standards for Healthy Start sites in order to solidify the Healthy Start Model, advocate for coordination of the Work Group activities with those of HRSA, insure the implementation of the Minimum Standards is feasible for all Healthy Start sites, and facilitate a rigorous research study in order to establish the Healthy Start Model as the primary cause of change related to Healthy Start goals. In order to keep members abreast of their work, the Work Group has provided information for the NHSA website including [presentations](#) and a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page. Please visit these pages for more and updated information from the Work Group.

### Saving Our Babies, Second Edition

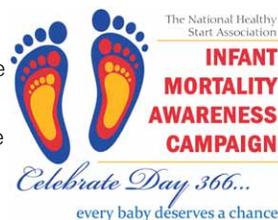
In May, NHSA released the second edition of *Saving Our Babies: The Impact of the Federal Healthy Start Initiative*. This updated publication includes profiles for all 105 federal Healthy Start sites. The publication was distributed at the HRSA Grantee Meeting in May, and the [PDF version](#) is available on the NHSA website.



### September is Infant Mortality Awareness Month

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. During the month of September, NHSA encourages and supports all Healthy Start and community projects as they endeavor to raise awareness about the critical issue of infant mortality.

In addition to the campaign materials that can be found on the [website](#), this year NHSA will continue to use social media to spread awareness. There will be blogs, Tweets, and videos all aimed at elevating this issue and giving it the attention we know it deserves. More information will be shared via email and posted to the [website](#) as we approach September.



### Sigmund Freud

"I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection."

### Bill Cosby

"Fatherhood is pretending the present you love most is soap-on-a-rope."

## National Healthy Start Association

Barbara Lee Jackson, MPH  
Interim Executive Director

Elizabeth Perry  
Executive Assistant  
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The National Healthy Start Association is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. The mission of 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 wellbeing.

## president's message



# STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

## Focus on Fathers

This is my first message as President of the Association, and I couldn't be more pleased that this issue of our newsletter is dedicated to fathers and the splendid work that our national network of projects does in including fathers and father figures in the battle to improve birth outcomes. I am a product of a very large, two parent family, and I grew up watching my parents share blended roles in raising their brood. Though my father was the disciplinarian between the two, he also cooked and bathed all the babies. He was this giant of a man who made tremendous sacrifices in his personal dreams and wishes to provide the best for his family. My mother was a stay-at-home mom and yet it was she who managed the family income and paid the bills. They were best friends and unwavering advocates for each of their nine children- being active in our school lives and leaders in our neighborhood. At the core of their relationship, my parents shared a deep and abiding respect for one another. This is the framework I bring to National Healthy Start Association's efforts to effectively and appropriately include, integrate, acknowledge, and enhance the role of fathers in the work of Healthy Start and in the fabric of the families we serve.

The Association's **Where Dads Matter** fatherhood initiative represents the culmination of 4 years of work by a tireless group of our members and builds on efforts that have been a part of many of our projects since Healthy Start's inception. This initiative has the following goals aimed at facilitating the full and complete integration of fathers and males into our programs and services:

- Creation of an action plan centered on an "attitude of inclusion" to be implemented in existing projects;
- Development of a baseline of marketing materials for inclusion in a toolkit and serves as a resource for Healthy Start and other community programs; and

- Development of a research design to expand and support the literature and research surrounding male involvement.

These goals are a part of the Association's strategic plan and will guide us in this important work to strengthen our families, our communities, and the nation. We look forward to being held to the task by each of you.

Sincerely,

Alma Roberts, President  
NHSA Board of Directors



## CELEBRATING FATHERS

### The Healthy Start Way

I am very pleased and excited to serve as the Interim Executive Director for the Association, and I truly appreciate the opportunity to sustain the Association's work started this year. Like everything else in life, change is coming. Change for Healthy Start is welcomed, because so much of our work is about systems' change, positive changes in birth outcomes, and changes to advance the well-being of our clients and their families. So, whether working with women to advance their Interconceptional care or assisting them in seeking a better education, or working with consumers to ensure their input on health policies impacting their lives, change is good for Healthy Start!

Likewise, our work to advance Male Involvement is about change and Healthy Start has been at the forefront with many partner organizations. Throughout the years, Healthy Start sites have created opportunities and led special initiatives, changing the collective dynamic to embrace males. Years ago, while serving as the Project Director of the Virgin Islands Perinatal Partnership, the U.S. Virgin Islands' Healthy Start Initiative, we launched the "It's Take Two to Give a Baby a Healthy Start" media campaign. In both Spanish and English, we encouraged men to be involved, and at the same time we encouraged our clients to invite their male partners to their prenatal visits. Similarly, we hosted a workshop aimed at the health and social service providers to learn how to accommodate men seeking and obtaining services. These efforts were very effective, because it sent the message that we were challenging the barriers to men, that men are welcomed and a very important part in their babies' lives from the beginning.

Four years ago, NHSA along with a committed group of 130 individuals launched Where Dads Matters. It ensured that the issue of fatherhood remained a priority concern for the organization.

Male involvement and fatherhood issues continue to be key focus areas of the Association. And so, with this also being the month of June, where we honor the men who are fathers, and men who fathered and nurtured children other than their own, we are dedicating this issue to them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Lee Jackson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Barbara Lee Jackson, MPH  
Interim Executive Director

## THE MALE INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVE

### The Father Factor: Give him the chance to father

**W**hen men cross from boyhood into manhood and then into fatherhood each of these stages bring something new and different. The move into fatherhood is very transforming. It brings greater purpose and pleasure to his life with a major sense of accomplishment and accountability.

As a father, there are sensibilities that I now have that I did not have in the past. As I was driving to work at 7:30 am recently, I saw a young lady with a flat tire on the side of the interstate. When I stopped to check to make sure everything was okay, I saw two children in the car – a two month old and a six year old. As the large trucks and cars passed by at speeds upwards of 60 miles per hour, there was no way as a father I could leave this mom with a flat tire and no spare along the highway.

Over the next 3 and a half-hours we worked to get a new tire, feed the children and mom, while keeping them all safe. In order for us to get her to her remaining appointments for the day, she had to accept the help and gain the trust that I had her and her children's best interest at heart. This is the Father Factor -- doing what is necessary to take care of children and moms in all types of circumstances when given the chance and opportunity.

As Father's Day is celebrated, we must remember the Father Factor because fathers really do matter. They bring value and support when given the opportunity. They can make a difference! The final kicker to the story is that after giving the mom my REACHUP, Inc., Central Hillsborough Healthy Start business card, she told me that she was in the program and has received Healthy Start services.

It was a rewarding sight to see mom continue her journey to drop her daughters off to the sitter and to school before heading to work herself. My last words to her were to take care of her girls and text me when she arrives at her destination. She did!

Healthy Start Family members continue to do great work and remember the Father Factor: Give him the chance to father.

*Kenneth Scarborough is the Male Involvement Coordinator at Central Hillsborough Healthy Start and a Volunteer with the NHTSA Male Involvement Initiative: Where Dads Matter.*

partner's corner

## MEN'S HEALTH NETWORK

**J**une is Men's Health Month, and churches, employers, government agencies and community organizations throughout the country and the world are celebrating by holding events to raise awareness of important men's health issues and preventive care. Men's Health Network (MHN) is leading this effort with the involvement of its many partners. MHN is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to reach men, boys, and their families where they live, work, play, and pray with health prevention messages and tools, screening programs, educational materials, advocacy opportunities, and patient navigation.

While celebrating Father's Day and Men's Health Month, we are reminded of the critical role that fathers play in the development of their children. Studies have shown that children with involved fathers are much less likely to get involved with drugs, alcohol or crime. They also manage their emotions better and are less likely to resort to violence. Although the responsibilities of fatherhood can at times be daunting, the rewards are tremendous for both children and their fathers. MHN has created a [brochure encouraging dads](#) to stay involved in their children's lives, even in cases where they are separated from the child's mother.

Fathers can help shape the health habits of their children by serving as role models. It's also important for parents to learn about the nutritional needs of their children so that they grow up to be as strong and healthy as possible. Check out our guide with simple tips for parents to make healthy eating fun on the web at <http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/nutritionparents.pdf>.

Having a kid is a prime motivator for many men to improve their own health habits so that they can be there to share all of life's important moments with their children. It's never too late to start eating a good diet and getting the exercise needed to be a healthy, active father. MHN has developed a resource for men to create a "healthy game plan" for eating and exercising which can be found at <http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/Nutrition.pdf>.

Please join us in celebrating all that fathers do to make a positive impact on the lives of their children, and let's encourage every man to take care of his health – for his own sake and for the health of his family.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



### **Appropriations Process off to a Slow Start**

The Fiscal Year 2013 appropriations process is slowly getting underway. On June 14, the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee passed the fiscal year 2013 Labor/HHS/ED Appropriations bill which included \$103.5 million for Healthy Start, the same amount provided last year and the same amount included in the President's budget request of this year. The U.S. House of Representatives should pass their version of the bill prior to the end of June. However, it is very unlikely that Congress will complete the process by the time the new federal fiscal year begins on October 1, 2012. We expect more short-term Continuing Resolutions (CRs), similar to the last several years.

Earlier this year, 14 U.S. Senators and 47 Members of the U.S. House signed onto an appropriations letter in support of Healthy Start. The letter, delivered to the Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate in March, requested \$103.5 million for Healthy Start, the same amount provided last year. Last year, the House letter had 19 signatures and the Senate letter had 14 signatures. We are making progress!

### **Fighting the Sequester**

The National Healthy Start Association is working with hundreds of other organizations to fight against the planned 'sequester' of federal funding planned for January 2013. Current law calls for 9% reduction in all federal discretionary programs, including Healthy Start. This will be an ongoing debate that will not be settled until after the November elections. Stay tuned for additional updates. The official name of this budget cutting is 'sequestration.'

### **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.

### **Community Transformation Grants**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has just announced \$70 million in funding through Community Transformation Grants (CTG) program. Funding is only for communities with less than 500,000 people. Programs must result in achievement of one or more of the five outcome measures: changes in weight, proper nutrition, physical activity, tobacco use, and social and emotional well-being. Applications are due July 31. Nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/communitytransformation/>.

### **Policy Webinars**

NHSA regularly holds policy webinars and conference calls to update project directors on policy developments in Washington, DC. These webinars provide convenient and simple ways to learn about NHSA's public policy agenda and discuss opportunities to take action in support of programs that serve disadvantaged pregnant women and families. Announcements for webinars and call-in information will be emailed to NHSA membership. Please participate if you can!

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

## Text4baby for Healthy Start Professionals

**T**ext4baby provides your clients with critical health and safety information. An educational program of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, text4baby is a free texting service for pregnant women and moms with infants under one. To sign up, women text BABY (or BEBE in Spanish) to 511411 and receive three free text messages each week, timed to their due date or baby's date of birth. There is no cost to sign up. Even if a woman does not have a text messaging plan, she can receive text4baby for free.

Results from the first text4baby evaluation indicate that it increases users' health knowledge, facilitates interaction with their health providers, improves their adherence to appointments and immunizations, and improves their access to health services.

### Sharing Text4baby with Your Clients

The National Healthy Start Association (NHSA), Healthy Start projects and State Coalitions nationwide are promoting text4baby. The text4baby program reinforces the guidance provided by Healthy Start projects to families across the country and they encourage moms to continue doing a good job.

Help your clients sign up for text4baby for FREE by sitting with them as they text BABY (or BEBE for Spanish) to 511411. They will be asked to input their due date or baby's birth date; and then their zip code and that's it!

Text4baby message content is developed with the support of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Pediatrics, Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Resources and Services Administration, Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and other experts. Text4baby is committed to providing a free quality service with no advertising or product promotions.

- Give your baby a good start. Don't drink alcohol, smoke or use drugs. For help quitting smoking, call 800-784-8669. Drugs & alcohol: 800-662-4357.
- Premature babies need extra help with breastfeeding. Even if your baby can't breastfeed at first, she can still be fed your pumped milk.
- If you have missed a visit with your Dr., be sure to re-schedule. Need to find a Dr? Call your health plan or 800-311-2229 for low-cost care.
- Time for baby's 2-month checkup! Time for him to get vaccines to protect him from serious diseases. And time for you to share how your baby's doing!

- Don't allow anyone to smoke around your baby or in your home or car. Smoke gets in the air & on your clothes & furniture. This can harm your baby.

Text4baby also provides alert messages to all of its participants. These messages include important information like recalls, new guidelines, warnings and key recommendations that are issued by key maternal child health organizations and public health agencies.

### How to Get Involved

- Tell your clients about text4baby as part of every interaction with them – tell them to sign up by texting BABY (or BEBE in Spanish) to 511411 on their cell phones. Ask at their next visit if they signed up and what they think.
- Order free pre-printed promotional materials for your clients at <http://www.tinyurl.com/t4bstore>. Place them in waiting rooms, appointment rooms, and at check in/out counters.
- Ask reception staff to hand each mom a text4baby tear-pad sheet at the end of her visit. She can read it while she checks out.
- Send an email to your staff and partners about text4baby, sharing details on how they can learn more and spread the word. Remind them that text4baby makes their job easier!
- Tell clients about text4baby during educational classes; have the whole room sign up together!
- Sign up for the Text4baby Tuesday e-newsletter to get weekly updates at <http://eepurl.com/h9h3>.
- Encourage your Healthy Start project, consortium or coalition to become a text4baby partner, visit [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org).

Text4baby is made possible through a public-private partnership that includes the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, Voxiva, CTIA-The Wireless Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Johnson & Johnson is the founding sponsor.

For more information about the text4baby program, visit [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org).



# mark your calendars!

## july

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### **10-11**

The Secretary's Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality (SACIM) will meet at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Bethesda, Maryland. For more information, visit <http://www.hrsa.gov/advisorycommittees/mchbadvisory/infantmortality/>.

### **11-13**

NACCHO Annual 2012 will be held at Hyatt Regency Century Plaza in Los Angeles, California. It is an opportunity to join a thousand of your colleagues for the year's largest gathering of local health officials in the United States. Visit [www.nacchoannual.org](http://www.nacchoannual.org) for more information.

### **22-25**

The Children's Defense Fund national conference will gather 3,000 leading researchers, educators, policymakers, practitioners, faith leaders, and advocates including 1,500 young adult leaders in Cincinnati, Ohio. Go to [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org) for more information.

## august

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### **National Breastfeeding Month**

#### **4-6**

The Fourth National Conference of State/Territorial/Tribal Breastfeeding Coalitions, convened by the USBC, will be held at the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. Register at [www.usbreastfeeding.org](http://www.usbreastfeeding.org).

## september

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### **National Infant Mortality Awareness Month**

Please email us at [info@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:info@nationalhealthystart.org) about activities/events your project is planning to commemorate the month, so that we can spread the word!

#### **20-22**

Reproductive Health 2012 will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana. Reproductive Health is sponsored annually by the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals. For more information or to register, visit [www.reproductivehealth2012.org](http://www.reproductivehealth2012.org).