



# GETTING OFF TO A HEALTHY START

NATIONAL HEALTHY  
START ASSOCIATION

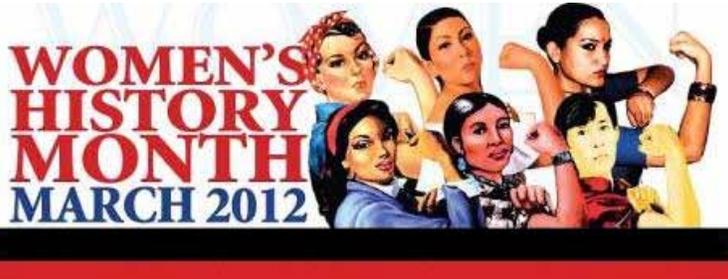
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NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START ASSOCIATION

march 2012

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In March, we reflect on the extraordinary women in history who have lived and died trying to ensure equality for all women. These women have pioneered in medical science and fought on the front lines of human rights' movements. Women have been making history for as long as history has been recorded. Cleopatra VII, born in 69 BC, became the Queen of Egypt at the age of 17, paving the way for women leaders on the world stage. In England, the first undisputed Queen began her reign in 1553 AD. Mary, daughter of Henry VIII, was the 3rd attempt at a female monarch, but she was the very first in a line of some of the most memorable leaders in English history including Victoria and Elizabeth. These strong women forged a path and inspired women the world over to dream as big as possible as they reached to become scientists, prime ministers, presidents, and leaders of every kind.

Women have been steering scientific advances for hundreds of years. These pioneers include Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman in the United States to receive a medical degree (1849) and Marie Curie, not only the first woman to win a Nobel Prize but also the first person to win two, one each in physics and chemistry for her work in radioactivity. Most in maternal and child health are familiar with the Apgar Newborn Scoring System, the first standardized method for evaluating a newborn's transition to life outside the womb. What may be less known is that this is named for Virginia Apgar, a physician known for her

advances and research in newborn health. Dr. Apgar devoted herself to the prevention of birth defects through public education and fundraising for research. She became the director of the division of congenital defects at the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (now the March of Dimes) and received many honors and awards for her work. These female luminaries in scientific study have contributed to huge advances in world health and most especially women's health.

During the U.S. civil rights movement, thousands of women embarked on a mission to end racial disparities and give voice to the voiceless. We remember Rosa Parks and the unsung heroes like Ella Baker, Septima Poinsette Clark, and Fannie Lou Hamer. These women fought against not only racism but sexism, unlike their male counterparts. They tackled both issues with grace and dignity and wove the fabric for a women's rights movement destined to once again alter the course of history.

If this theme sounds familiar, it's because we continue these battles every day. We strive to give voice to the voiceless, and we raise awareness that women's health is not to be ignored. We take this one month each year to be reminded of the successes of all of the women who have come before us, but we must remember each day to remain inspired by them to continue the journey these women prepared us for.

### First Lady Michelle Obama



"I am an example of what is possible when girls from the very beginning of their lives are loved and nurtured by people around them. I was surrounded by extraordinary women in my life who taught me about quiet strength and dignity."

## National Healthy Start Association

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Healthy Babies, Sedgwick County  
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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



# WE DREAMT BIG AND ACCOMPLISHED MUCH

## A fond farewell

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as President of the National Healthy Start Association. As my term comes to a close on March 31, 2012, I am forever grateful to the NHSA Executive Team, NHSA BOD, NHSA Advisory Committee, and Staff who remained committed to the mission and vision. Many thanks, also, to all of our 105 sites whose diligence continues to reduce infant mortality and perinatal disparities.

In the course of the past two years, we experienced the unexpected the loss of one of our MCH champions, Maribeth Badura. We rose above our pain to celebrate her legacy by focusing on the success of Healthy Start. We remain poised and "shovel ready" to realize the vision and mission of NHSA, although we will miss the leadership of Dr. Peter van Dyck, Associate Administrator of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, who has retired. Yet, we welcome, Dr. Michael Lu's leadership, as he assumes the position of Associate Administrator. We look forward to an innovative partnership so that NHSA and its constituency can do even greater things to increase good health outcomes for our families.

My term as President also was filled with a myriad of challenges largely on the heels of a tumultuous political climate threatening the security/funding of our Healthy Start projects. A collective effort of our advocacy and education leadership, congressional support, community stakeholders, participants, staff, and various Associations yielded no cut of our federal funding.

As I reflect upon my presidency I delight in the fact that we dreamt big and accomplished much. We conducted a successful Board Development Retreat; implemented a successful Strategic Planning Retreat which produced a three year strategic plan (internal/external documents); and developed three critical priorities for improving birth outcomes and women's health status. NHSA's first white paper was created, National Healthy Start Initiative: A National Net-

work for Effective Family Support Services and Home Visitation; an Evaluation Workgroup Committee was formed to move the Healthy Start Projects toward evaluation with scientific rigor; and new ties and relationships were established with other governmental, as well as public and private, organizations and agencies.

At the beginning of my Presidency, I committed myself to expanding NHSA's successes and minimizing our challenges; to extending our reach by developing formal and informal partnerships and to continuing to develop, perfect and implement strategies that showcase our strengths and competencies so that our funders and other supporters know that we can verify our assertions about our effectiveness. While working passionately to accomplish these goals, we continue to emphasize the importance of increasing our visibility across the nation. I believe we made great strides toward these accomplishments.

I look forward to working closely with our new President, Alma Roberts, NHSA BOD and Staff as we continue to strengthen Healthy Start's position and visibility with compassion and determination to effectively implement NHSA's mission and vision.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you,

Estrellita "Lo" Berry, President  
NHSA Board of Directors



## NHTSA MEMBERS MATTER

We heard you and we're improving

These first two months of 2012 have been very busy for the Association as we prepare to host our members and partners in Washington, DC for the Annual Spring Conference, March 11-14th. We have also been busy focusing on the needs of our members. At the beginning of the year, we released the results of the 2011 membership survey and have been diligently looking at ways to incorporate the feedback received around communication and technical assistance. We take this information seriously and thank everyone who responded. NHTSA has already taken a first step in incorporating some of the feedback through a few changes you will see in this newsletter such as having varying themes for each issue and shortening the newsletter. Our goal is to provide a product that our members, as well as our partners, will find useful, easy to read, and informative.

As I mentioned, we are trying out themes with this newsletter and in this issue we will focus on National Nutrition and Women's History Month where we will highlight the great work of women in the field of Maternal and Child Health. Women like Maribeth Badura, who served as the Director of the Division of Healthy Start from 1993 until her passing in October 2010. We would be remiss not to mention this amazing woman as we spotlight some of our great MCH female trailblazers.

When I think of Maribeth, I seem to always think of the Spring Conference, because she truly enjoyed being a part of this annual event. I too, am always excited around this time of year because it is my opportunity to step away from the four walls of my office and connect with our members, as well as with the families Healthy Start serves. It is important to me that I have that face time and talk to them about what is going on in their communities. It keeps me steadfast to the NHTSA mission, it gives me the pulse of what is really going on in neighborhoods, but the time spent with them also gives me the energy to do more. I leave the conference with lots of innovative ideas, new people I can connect with to make those ideas come to fruition, and often a new way of looking at issues impacting our families. Of course, I can't wait to hold a Healthy Start baby in my arms to TRULY remind me why I wake up each day and walk into the doors of the NHTSA office. The smile of that child is what I look forward to each and every year.

I look forward to seeing so many of you in the nation's capital and working together for three days to develop a blueprint of how we will continue to ensure our families and communities have what they need to be healthy.

Stacey D. Cunningham, MSW, MPH  
Executive Director

## THE MALE INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVE

### Side By Side: A Healthier Her

**A**s this issue focuses on a Women's Health, men may see the title and "move on" or not engage. This article attempts to offer support for the issue and to build the engagement of men to the topic. Research is clear that his attention to her health is tied to his health, their health, and the entire family's health. Our work in Healthy Start causes us to focus on fathers and dads being present and a part of women's health from the very beginning to include pre-conception days. We know that a healthier woman and man conceiving a child results in a healthier pregnancy, birth and throughout the life of their child(ren).

Much of our health advice for fathers and men comes during pregnancy. Many of these efforts should be pursued before and beyond pregnancy. We educate and inform fathers and men to:

- Go with her to prenatal doctor visits.
- Communicate words of encouragement as her body changes and let her know you still love and care for her.
- Massage and caress her in order to relax and comfort her.
- Encourage her to avoid alcohol and smoking.
- Do activities together to keep them in shape and active.
- Express concerns for her overall health – make sure she schedules and attends her annual well woman's health visit while scheduling one you.
- Compliment her regularly when healthier activities and behaviors are happening.
- Help out and partner on various duties and responsibilities in and out of the house, including preparing healthier meals, carpooling, child appointments, in order to alleviate stress and allow her to rest.

Remember that her health is connected to your health and family health happens by recognizing both. Read more by visiting: <http://www.indianwomenshealth.com/Caring-for-your-pregnant-wife-396.aspx#top>

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

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### healthy start news

## C.H.I.C.

### Conceptional Health – Important Conference!

The Importance of Pre- and Inter-Conceptional Health

On April 23 and 24, The Enterprise Community Healthy Start Program and the Augusta Regional Maternal and Infant Care Program will sponsor this event at Clayton State University in Morrow, Georgia. The conference seeks to provide data-driven analysis and evidenced-based strategies to promote pre-and inter-conceptional health of women, to link the life course perspective to women's health, and to provide examples of MCH life course practices, programs, and policies related to pre-and inter-conceptional health.

The registration fee for the event is \$75.

For additional information, please visit [www.georgiahealth.edu/chic](http://www.georgiahealth.edu/chic).

NHTSA 13TH ANNUAL  
SPRING CONFERENCE

MARCH 11-14, 2012

HYATT REGENCY ON CAPITOL HILL

Keep up with the conference  
conversations on Twitter with  
#NHTSA2012 and be sure to follow  
us @NatlHealthyStrt for updates  
throughout the events!

## CONSUMER SPOTLIGHT

### Faye Rahman

**F**aye Rahman, Wichita, KS, enrolled in the Healthy Babies program when she was six months pregnant with her third child. Faye had learned of the program when she attended a baby fair hosted by a local hospital. Faye joined the free program hoping to avoid the complications she developed with her prior pregnancies. Healthy Babies, funded in part since 1997 with federal Healthy Start dollars, offers a modified Centering group model designed to enhance regular prenatal care services.

Faye was placed in a group with other women (and their support persons) who had due dates that were similar to her own. Faye says she was a little nervous about being in a group setting at first, but mostly excited. One of Faye's two group facilitators, a Registered Nurse, helped Faye monitor her blood pressure during the pregnancy portion of group and encouraged Faye to head to the hospital when they noticed her blood pressure was extremely high. Faye delivered a healthy, full term infant, without developing the complications she had with her previous two pregnancies. Though she had not breastfed her two older children, Faye made the decision to breastfeed her new baby. With help and encouragement from her group facilitators and the other women in the group, Faye continued to breastfeed through rough spots and she continues to breastfeed her boy through 13 months. Although she has appreciated the education, Faye says she views the group mostly as a support group. She says she enjoys the group setting, because she gets to meet new people and hear their new stories and have new experiences. Faye has remained an active member in her group, and she and the other group members recently celebrated their children's first birthdays! Faye recently went back to college and is



studying secondary education and hopes to be a middle school English teacher one day.

In the Spring of 2011, Healthy Babies expanded its consortium with a consumer-only group. Faye was asked to participate due to her faithful attendance to group sessions, and she was excited for the opportunity. She also enjoys bringing infant mortality awareness to her friends and getting the discussion going on ways to help reduce the high infant death rates we have in our community, especially among our African American population. Additionally, Faye has participated in research studies on "fears and other barriers to physical activity during pregnancy," and "attitudes toward breastfeeding" offered by phone interview or on-site through Healthy Babies' partnership with the University of Kansas School of Medicine - Wichita. Faye also plans to attend the Healthy Start Grantee Meeting & 20th Anniversary Celebration along with one of her facilitators in the spring of 2012.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### Budget

President Obama released his fiscal year 2013 budget request on February 13. The request includes \$103.5 million for Healthy Start, the same amount provided last year. The 'budget justification' for HRSA programs, including Healthy Start, can be found here: <http://www.hrsa.gov/about/budget/budgetjustification2013.pdf>. Beginning on page 215, the document contains seven pages specifically focused on Healthy Start, including funding history and program objectives. The document also highlights several Healthy Start projects that have achieved significant success.

The President's budget is the first step in the annual budget and appropriations process. The U.S. Congress -- including the Republican-led House and Democrat-led Senate -- will consider the President's recommendations as they begin the appropriations process.

### Congressional Honorees

Each year, NHTSA honors several members of Congress who have actively supported Healthy Start and our policy priorities. This year, the NHTSA Government Relations Committee has chosen the following Senators to be honored at our Capitol Hill reception:

- U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland
- U.S. Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon
- U.S. Senator Richard Durbin of Illinois
- U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York
- U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow of Michigan

If you think your Member of Congress or U.S. Senator is deserving of special recognition at our 2013 conference, please contact Jon Terry.

# MARCH OF DIMES

In celebration of National Women's month this March, the March of Dimes is proud to partner with National Healthy Start Association as a longstanding Prematurity Campaign Alliance member. We also want to share some information with Healthy Start sites across the country on our Healthy Babies Healthy Business® program that is available as a free program to organizations and corporations. Healthy Babies Healthy Business® was developed by the March of Dimes to assist organizations in reaching out to employees in their childbearing years to provide timely wellness information related to having healthy pregnancies.

## Background

- One-half of all births in the US occur to women in the workplace. (This does not include births among spouses of covered employees)
- Approximately 5% of women of childbearing age in the workforce will have a baby in any given year.
- There are over 500,000 babies born prematurely every year.
- The annual societal economic costs of prematurity (medical, early intervention, special education, lost productivity) are \$26 billion as estimated by the Institute of Medicine
- A large, self-insured employer may pay 11 times more for the infant costs alone for a premature baby vs. a healthy full-term delivery, \$49,003 vs. \$4,551.
- Preconception, prenatal and postpartum education may help women change their lifestyle, behaviors and attitude to increase the chances of a positive pregnancy outcome and healthy baby.

## The Program

Key to program is My 9 Months® a customizable, no cost, online component that links employees to health information in English and Spanish directly from their organization's intranet or other web based access point. There are three sections of content – Before You're Pregnant, During Pregnancy and Mom & Baby that include a series of topics covering the most important information for women and their partners.

Healthy Babies Healthy Business® also includes access to March of Dimes' award-winning array of print materials and videos and features

personal support options including email access to health experts, online communities and social media posts.

In most organizations, the responsibility for implementing HBHB falls within Human Resources, Wellness, or Medical Director Departments. They may need some minimal assistance from IT to implement the "My 9 Months" which is a simple two-step process.

Over 330 organizations including Cigna, United Auto Workers, Home Depot and Wal-Mart are currently using Healthy Babies Healthy Business® to help working mothers and their partners have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies.



For more information or to implement the program, contact your local March of Dimes chapter or Jennifer Nicoletti, Director, Educational Outreach & Marketing, March of Dimes National Office, 914-997-4781, [jnicoletti@marchofdimes.com](mailto:jnicoletti@marchofdimes.com). For information on the Prematurity Campaign contact Phyllis Williams-Thompson, 914-997-4569, [pwilliamsthompson@marchofdimes.com](mailto:pwilliamsthompson@marchofdimes.com).

# RESEARCH NEWS

## March is National Nutrition Month - Learn More About Prenatal Nutrition

Seeing a consumer through a healthy pregnancy is a rewarding experience. Often when a woman becomes pregnant, or is trying to get pregnant, she develops a new perspective on her health. For most, this means a new or renewed interest in nutrition and healthy food choices. Some women are afraid their diet is insufficient and worry it might affect their baby. Others simply want to do everything in their power to have an easy pregnancy and a healthy baby. This is a great opportunity for health care providers or case managers to work with families to ensure mom and baby are healthy.

The following guidelines were developed to help moms get the best possible nutrition for her and her baby. These guidelines are only recommendations and may need to be adjusted if the mother is under or overweight, unable to eat, has special dietary needs or food allergies or if she is carrying more than one baby.

### Food Guidelines

The USDA food guide for pregnant and/or breastfeeding women, [My Pyramid Plan](#), is a great tool for families to use to get their own individualized nutrition plans.

#### Key nutrients:

- Protein
- Folic acid and other vitamins
- Calcium
- Micronutrients, including iron

#### Food servings recommended per day:

- 6-11 breads and cereals
- 3-5 vegetables
- 2-4 fruits
- 2-3 protein/protein alternates (6-9 oz. per day)
- 2-3 dairy
- Drink 8 or more large glasses of water

### Guidelines Recommended Weight Gain

#### During Pregnancy

Weight gain usually occurs at a smooth, gradual rate during pregnancy. For the first three months, women should expect to gain a total of 2 to 5 pounds. During the remaining six months, the normal

rate of weight gain is about 2 to 6 pounds per month or one pound per week. The average expected weight gain is 25 to 35 pounds if mom begins a pregnancy at a desirable weight and is carrying only one baby. A variety of weight gain levels can result in healthy babies. It is important is for the mother to gain enough weight to keep her and the baby healthy.

#### Range of weight gain\*:

*If mom starts her pregnancy...*

- **Underweight**, the recommended total weight gain is 28 to 40 lbs.
- **At desirable weight**, the recommended total weight gain is 25 to 35 lbs.
- **Overweight**, the recommended total weight gain is 15 to 25 lbs.
- **Very overweight**, the recommended total weight gain is 15 lbs.
- **With twins**, the recommended total weight gain is 35 to 45 lbs.

*\* Women who are shorter than 5'2" should gain weight within the lower ranges. Teenagers and women who smoke should gain weight within the upper ranges. Moms never want to lose weight while pregnant.*

The topic of weight and weight gain can be a source of concern and anxiety for some women. It is best to inform moms that pregnancy is the ideal time to embrace her body as it gradually changes in shape and size. Moms should remember that pregnancy is a temporary state. With good nutrition and exercise, there is every reason to expect that she will return to her pre-pregnancy weight after her baby is born and her body has recovered from the birth.

#### Resources:

United States Department of Agriculture <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome>

My Pyramid Plan <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Gerber: Start Healthy, Stay Healthy [http://www.gerber.com/allstages/nutrition\\_and\\_feeding/prenatal-nutrition.aspx](http://www.gerber.com/allstages/nutrition_and_feeding/prenatal-nutrition.aspx)

Nutrition.gov: Smart Nutrition Starts here [http://www.nutrition.gov/nal\\_display/index.php?info\\_center=11&tax\\_level=2&tax\\_subject=395&topic\\_id=1690&placement\\_default=0](http://www.nutrition.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=11&tax_level=2&tax_subject=395&topic_id=1690&placement_default=0)

# mark your calendars!

## march

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### 21-24

The Young Child with Special Needs in Las Vegas, NV. For more information visit: <http://www.contemporaryforums.com/Live-CE-Conferences/2012/The-Young-Child-with-Special-Needs/>.

## april

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### 10-11

2012 National Health Promotion Summit in Washington, DC. Visit <http://www.aptrweb.org/2012summit.html> to learn more.

### 23-24

C.H.I.C.: Conceptional Health will be held in Morrow, GA (outside of Atlanta). A conference on the importance of pre- & inter-conceptional health will be held at Clayton State University in Morrow, GA. The conference is sponsored by Enterprise Community Healthy Start & Augusta Regional Maternal and Infant Care Program. For more information: <http://www.georgiahealth.edu/chic/>.

## june

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### 18-20

Head Start's 11th National Research Conference will be held in Washington, DC. Visit <http://www.cvent.com/events/head-start-s-11th-national-research-conference/event-summary-6c5b5454fe2446fe8c4c9ed70c52fc4e.aspx> to learn more.

### 25-27

25th Anniversary Meeting of the Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research: a lifetime of research through the life course will be held at the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis, Minnesota. For more information visit <http://www.sper.org/meeting/index.html>.

### 26-28

APHA Mid-Year Meeting will be held in Charlotte, NC. For more information visit <http://www.apha.org/Midyear/>.