



COALITION NEWS

JANUARY 2009



Reminders and News:

- Law Forum meets the first Tuesday of each month at the Father & Child Resource Center from 630-830pm. Free legal advice on issues affecting families and children. Call (772)463-2888 to reserve your place.
- Baby Basic Moms Club Meetings have begun: Wednesdays from 1-2pm at the Parental Outreach Center and 2 Thursdays a month from 1030-1130pm at the Gertrude Walden Childcare Center. Call (772)463-2141 for more information.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Family Law Forum, February 3rd, 2009 at 6:30pm in the CSC Conf. Room.
- General Coalition Meeting, January 28th, 2009 at 3pm at the Prenatal Outreach Center
- Board Meeting, February 19th, 2009 at 12pm in the CSC Training Room.

Pregnant? Get Prenatal Care—call 772-463-2141

The Prenatal Outreach Center can help you find:

- Medicaid Health Insurance
- A Doctor
- A Maternity Care Advisor
- Referrals to WIC
- Referrals to Healthy Start
- Educational Materials

Prenatal Outreach Center
3257 SE Salerno Road
Stuart, FL 34997
772-463-2141

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings,

January started off with the FASHC advocating to maintain our current funding. I traveled along with Lorna Sinclair, member of the Board, to Tallahassee this month to meet with other Healthy Start coalitions to appeal to our Florida legislatures currently voting on cuts to Healthy Start funding.

The needs have been clearly defined, with over 1,680 infant deaths and 20,767 low birth weights in Florida in 2007. Healthy Start has been recognized with influencing lowered poor birth outcomes.

We are sincerely grateful to our legislatures, who voted in a special session this week to minimize cuts to Healthy Start. Although we do not want funds for services for at-risk babies to be cut at all, the proposed cut to Healthy Start of 1.4% rather than the 4% previously proposed will be a great help.

Unfortunately, a 22% cut in funding (\$9.6mil) for the 2009-2010 fiscal year is still proposed by the DOH to the Florida Governor. This may result in a 22% cut in the number of babies we can serve resulting in the potential loss of services for more than 43,000 babies. It would also mean the additional loss of federal matching funds and the loss of a significant number of jobs.

A cut to Healthy Start will likely result in an actual increase in costs. Since research has shown that \$1 invested in preventing an unhealthy birth results in a \$6 savings in future medical, education, and other costs, then a cut of \$9.5 million in prevention funding may result in an additional cost of \$57 million in future healthcare costs for Low Birth Weight babies. However, after this visit we do feel that the legislatures are well informed on the issues at stake and will make decisions according to the best interest of our women and children.

Roy Miller, President of the Children's Campaign, a nonpartisan and charitable advocacy organization in Tallahassee, recently published an article in the Lakeland Ledger calling for revenue for Florida's children. He notes the great successes Florida has seen over the past few decades, including the closing of disgraceful warehousing institutions for developmentally disabled and mentally ill children, Healthy Start and children's health-insurance programs assuring access to doctors and nurses, the Guardian ad Litem program, Healthy Families, Shelter services, and programs for girls experiencing problems at school or home.

However, he points out that despite these and many other success, "Florida's growing population numbers continue to strain programs serving the most vulnerable families."

The underinvestment in maternal health services is resulting in higher rates of infant mortality and low birth weight. Miller notes that we rank at the bottom of the nation in child health, but near the top in school dropout rates and youths in adult prisons.

Florida must stop budget cuts to programs so essential to our population. We will continue to advocate for Assuring Access to Health Care for Women and Children in Florida and commend our legislatures for their support in this week's special session. We hope that we can continue to count on their support in the future and will continue to work together as a coalition to be a force for change in the upcoming years for our county's women and children.

-Lisa Olds, Executive Director

HEALTHY START FUNDERS



Children's Services Council
OF MARTIN COUNTY



United Way
of Martin County



Community Foundation
For Palm Beach and
Martin Counties



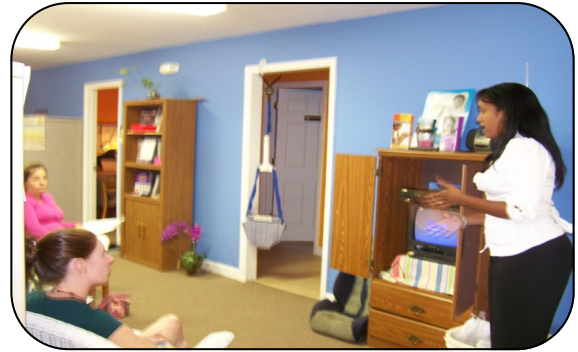
Allegany Franciscan Ministries, Inc.

MOMS CLUB AT THE PRENATAL OUTREACH CENTER

We are excited to announce that **Healthy Start Moms Club** has completed the first series of meetings with a total of 14 overall sessions and an average of 10 attendees at the Prenatal Outreach Center site.

Moms Club at the POC began their series in September with Baby Basics meetings, inviting moms to talk about the basics of prenatal health and health literacy. Topics included Healthcare 101, Eating for Two, Breastfeeding, Healthy Pregnancy Lifestyle, Labor and Delivery and Ready for Baby. The members engaged in activities such as "Who Do I Call When I Have a Question," "Body Vocabulary," and "What We Know About Breastfeeding." Moms Club meets weekly at the Prenatal Outreach Center and is also available at other sites.

Baby Basics Moms Club invites guest speakers during our one hour sessions. This series' guest speaker was Andrea Dial of Babies R Us who covered special topics such as "Guide to Feeding Seminar,"



"ABC's of Daily Care," and "Nurture by Nature: a wonderful look at simple ways to create a healthy and safe home environment for you and your baby using earth friendly products."

We also share our time slot every other week with **Tykes and Teens**, during which Rosanna Zapata, LCSW, facilitates the Women to Women Support Group offering a one of a kind service that includes Interconceptional Education and Counseling. Rosanna engages our moms with in-depth discussions on topics such as "Self Care," "Family and Motherhood," "Relationships and Finances,"

"Education," and much more.

At the close of the series, all members who participated in Moms Club sessions receive a certificate of participation, gift bags, and prizes sponsored by Healthy Start, Babies R Us, and Carenet Pregnancy Services.

Healthy Start would like to thank the What to Expect Foundation, The Alleghany Foundation, Children Services Council, Babies R Us, and Carenet, as well as our staff members, community partners, and volunteers for your support and efforts in making this program a success!

-Submitted by Susanna Sierra,
Community Health Educator

Mom-To-Be Rachelle Brennan Named Moms Club Grand Prize Winner

Mommy Rachelle Brennan, age 20 and member of Baby Basics Moms Club, beamed with joy after being told she was the grand prize winner of a 4D Live Motion Ultrasound Package from Stork Vision in Port St. Lucie sponsored by Babies R Us. Rachelle is 26 weeks pregnant and a first time mom looking forward to having a baby girl in March 2009.

Rachelle received the news at the close of our last session before the holiday break on December 17th. She expressed

that the groups are great and looks forward to beginning the new series starting in January. She recommends Moms Club to all moms and found the Baby Basics materials very helpful. She uses the materials often to find information on her own. Women to Women support group, available in the shared time slot on Wednesdays, helped Rachelle deal with some of her most sensitive and distressful issues.

Rachelle was selected as

the member with the highest attendance and committed participation to Moms Club. She participated in both Baby Basics Moms Club meetings and Women to Women Support Groups attending a total of 9 sessions.

Healthy Start Congratulates Rachelle Brennan for being a wonderful mom and a great example to many. *Great Job Rachelle!*

-Submitted by Susanna Sierra,
Community Health Educator



THE NUMBER OF UNINSURED CHILDREN IN FLORIDA CONTINUES TO RISE

Nearly 19% of children in Florida do not have health insurance, the second highest percentage in the country, and experts predict that this number will continue to rise as more parents are laid off and employers raise the costs of insurance. Furthermore, this data reflects studies between 2005-2007 and most believe that the actual number is much higher considering this year's financial difficulties.

Health care advocates point to low paying tourism jobs in Florida. They also state that many employers cannot cover the costs of health care coverage.

Recently, thousands of children covered under Florida's KidCare program were disenrolled by mistake because a



new company hired to handle the KidCare paperwork had difficulty during the transition. They have announced that they will no longer disenroll children until this situation is rectified.

Lawmakers have agreed, however, to spend \$13.4 million to cover an additional 38,000 children under the program.

Did you Know?

The Prenatal Outreach Center, located at the corner of Salerno Rd. and US1 in Stuart, offers the following services:

- Baby Basics Classes for Moms-to-be and new Moms
 - Moms Club
 - Beds 4 Babies and Infant CPR
 - MomCare
- Prenatal Care Payment Assistance

The Outreach Center can be contacted at 772-463-2141

Mission Statement

To establish a system in Martin County that ensures that all families have access to prenatal care and that ALL infants and children up to the age of three have access to services that promote healthy growth and development.

PROPOSED \$1 TAX ON CIGARETTES

Currently, Florida is ranked number 46 in the nation tax rate on cigarettes with a taxation of 34 cents per pack. However, a coalition of health care providers are pushing for a dollar increase in the state's cigarette tax. This increase would bring us up to position 21 in the national tax rank, still well below New York, which currently charges \$2.75 per pack in taxes.

The purpose of the tax increase is two-fold. Firstly, it is expected to dissuade teenagers from starting to smoke, eventually decreasing the amount of smokers in Florida. Secondly, the tax would increase health care funding.

Florida's current tax generates approximately \$440 million annually, and the new tax is estimated to bring in \$1 billion annually. Health Providers top priority for the funds is to save Medicaid. The American Cancer society, who has tried for two years to pass the tax, wants to direct money into treatment and research. Both parties wish to bring more doctors and nurses to Florida.

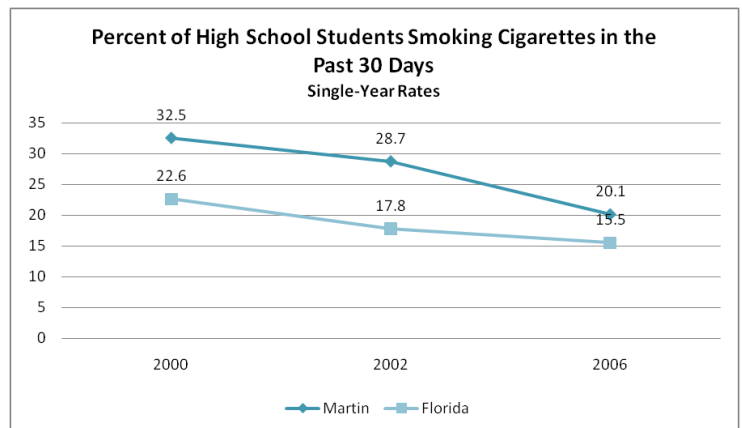
Of the 46 states with residency positions, Florida ranks 43rd or worse in the amount of seats offered. As a result, many medical students are leaving the state and seeking positions elsewhere. The residency is the biggest predictor of where a



doctor will practice. The government froze Medicare spending on new residency spots as part of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Supporters of the tax believe a portion of the money should go to creating more residency positions. Projections show that by 2020, 13 million oncology visits will be delayed because there won't be enough doctors or nurses to see the patients.

According to reports, smoking incurs \$6.3 billion in health-care costs, approximately \$1.2 billion of which is covered by Medicaid. The \$1 tax is not expected to solve Florida's health care funding problems, but there is hope it will help. If it meets its purpose, driving down the number of smokers, it will also drive down the dollars earned by the increased tax.

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids reports that a 10 percent increase in the price of cigarettes will reduce youth smoking by 7 percent and overall cigarette consumption by 4 percent.



MEET OUR STAFF

LISA WILSON, OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Lisa Wilson is our Outreach Coordinator at the Prenatal Outreach Center. Lisa is originally from upstate New York, but moved to Florida and graduated from Jupiter High School. She bounced between New York, Florida, and Illinois after high school, but moved back to Florida permanently in 2003.

Lisa is a graduate of IRCC and was named

Valedictorian of her LPN nursing program.

She has three children, a daughter, Jenna, and two boys, Steven and Joseph. Her sons are in elementary and high school, while her daughter is enrolled full-time at Indian River State College.

Before joining Healthy Start in May 2007, Lisa worked with Martin Nursing

and Restorative in Geriatrics.

Lisa enjoys spending time with her children and riding Harley Motorcycles.



FOLIC ACID AWARENESS WEEK: JANUARY 5-11

January 5-11 is National Folic Acid Awareness Week. Consuming 400 mcg of folic acid daily, before and during early pregnancy can help reduce a woman's risk of having a pregnancy affected by a serious birth defect of the spine or brain.

Folic acid is a B vitamin. Our bodies use it to make new cells. Everyone needs folic acid, but it is especially important for women who may become pregnant. If a woman has enough folic acid in her body

before she is pregnant, it can help prevent major birth defects of her baby's brain and spine. These birth defects are neural tube defects or NTDs. Women need to take folic acid every day, starting before they are pregnant to help prevent NTDs.

CDC and the US Public Health Service urge every woman who could become pregnant to get 400 micrograms (400 mcg) of synthetic folic acid every day.

An easy way to ensure you are getting 100% of the daily recommended value of Folic Acid is to take a multi-vitamin or a Folic Acid pill. Multi-vitamins containing Folic Acid today come in many varieties, including chewable chocolate and fruit flavors, liquid, and larger oval or smaller round pills. Many stores offer folic acid supplements for just pennies a day. When choosing a supplement, be sure to check the label to be sure you are getting the proper amount of folic acid.

Some cereals are also a good source of folic acid, however always check the nutrition label to be sure.

Birth defects of the brain and spine usually occur during the first few weeks of preg-

Supplement Facts		
	Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value
Folic Acid	400 mcg	100%
Vitamin B12	6 mcg	100%
Pantothenic Acid	5 mg	50%
Calcium	450 mg	45%
Iron	18 mg	100%
Magnesium	50 mg	12%
Zinc	15 mg	100%

nancy, often before the mother knows she is pregnant. Therefore, all women should get into the habit of meeting the daily requirements of 400 mcg of folic acid daily whether they are trying to get pregnant or not.

In order for folic acid to be effective, it needs to be taken everyday starting before the pregnancy.

Join us in acknowledging Folic Acid Awareness Week by encouraging the women in your life to get into the habit of taking a folic acid supplement everyday!

Make it easy to remember. Try taking a vitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid:

- When you brush your teeth, OR
- With your breakfast, OR
- After your shower, OR
- When you brush your hair, OR
- If you have children, take your vitamin when they take theirs

Seeing the vitamin bottle on the bathroom or kitchen counter can help you remember it, too.

DEBATE OVER MANDATORY AIDS TESTING INCREASES IN MALAYSIA

The Malaysian government plans to expand a rule requiring HIV testing for all couples. HIV/AIDS experts and civil rights activists argue that such a policy does not prevent the transmission of the virus and violates individual rights (Inter Press Service).

Muslim clerics recently extended a limited mandatory testing policy requiring all Muslim couples to be tested before marriage. This decision was based on an argu-

ment made by non-Muslim organizations, individuals, and religious groups that HIV transmission can only be curbed by mandatory testing of couples.

Some Malaysian officials have suggested rules that would prevent couples testing positive for HIV from having sex or reproducing, and some even suggest quarantining HIV-positive individuals.

Since a no-cost needle distribution campaign and harm-reduction methadone

programs have been in place in Malaysia there has been a 50% decrease in the amount of HIV cases. However, there is a 35% increase in the number of HIV cases among married women ages 21 to 35. Experts attribute the increase to men who contract the virus through unprotected sex with commercial sex workers and then transmit it to their wives.

Estimates show that about 80,000 people are currently living in Malaysia with HIV.