



NORTHEAST FLORIDA HEALTHY START COALITION
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saving babies. strengthening families. building communities

NORTHEAST FLORIDA
 HEALTHY START COALITION

annual report

2008





In 2007,
 154 babies died before their
 first birthday...
 9 classes of children won't start
 kindergarten in 5 years...

Coalition Membership & Staff

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Nancy Perrone, QI Consultant

Mickee Brown, Black Infant Health Community Council





Every baby deserves an equal & healthy start to life...

Letter from the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition

Dear Healthy Start Friends,

Infant mortality received increased community attention in 2008, as local leaders and area residents recognized its growing impact on families and neighborhoods in our region. This year, Healthy Start initiatives were strengthened as new initiatives created fresh partnerships and the community most affected by infant mortality became increasingly involved in our efforts. As a result, infant death rates remained at the lowest level in more than a decade. Despite this achievement, rates in the five-county area remain above state and national rates, with significant racial disparities.

Healthy Start services delivered to at-risk women and infants are a critical tool in the fight to improve birth outcomes. Nearly 4,650 women and 1,650 infants were served by the program in 2007-08. In addition to the state Healthy Start program, two special community initiatives continue to provide services reaching families at highest risk of losing a baby before age one. The Magnolia Project offered well-woman and prenatal care, case management, health education, and community development services to more than 700 pre-and interconceptional women in 2008. The Azalea Project served more than 100 substance-involved families who are in danger of acquiring HIV or delivering a substance-exposed baby.

Community partnerships grew tremendously in 2008 as a result of the landmark Infant Mortality study completed by the Jacksonville Community Council Inc. The study represented a significant step in increasing awareness about the fact that too many babies in our community are dying before reaching their first birthdays.

The Coalition Board and membership ended 2008 with a new strategic plan designed to make the organization even more effective and responsive to its mission. We hope you will join us as we continue our work, grounded in the belief that *every baby deserves the best possible start in life and should be raised by a healthy family in a caring, prosperous community.*

Sincerely,

Rev. Tom Rodgers
Chairman, NEFL Healthy Start Coalition

Carol Brady
Executive Director, NEFL Healthy Start Coalition



Building Communities



Community Advocacy & Public Policy Efforts

State-funded maternal and child health services continued to experience budget challenges in 2008. The Community Advocacy & Public Policy (CAPP) committee, along with other child advocates, held strong and fought off many proposed cuts in 2008, but have already started preparing for the potential reductions for the 2009-10 Florida budget.

Early in the year, the committee met with legislators throughout the five-county region to share information about funding and services for our most vulnerable population, women and children. Healthy Start funding was maintained, but Florida KidCare outreach was cut from the 2008 budget. Local assistance to aid families seeking to obtain low-cost health insurance for their children is significantly limited because of the cuts.

With the help from community partners, the Coalition was able to fund two AmeriCorps members to continue the outreach efforts in the five-county region.

Sustaining the Safe Sleep Partnership

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related deaths are the leading cause of infant mortality in the region after the first month of life. In 2006, the Northeast Florida Safe Sleep Partnership was established to educate the community about safe sleep behaviors for infants.

In 2008, the partnership continued its dedication to the community by receiving funding from the CJ Foundation for SIDS and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida. A six-month multi-media advertising campaign was implemented across the five-county region. The campaign included newspaper, transit and billboard advertising. Also, marketing brochures, magnets and other materials were printed with the ABC's of Safe Sleep, an adaptation of a campaign developed by the Baltimore City Health Department.

Funding also helped support a part-time outreach staff member to work on educating and empowering local neighborhoods to advocate for safe sleep for babies. The funding incorporated nontraditional techniques to engage barber shops, beauty salons and churches.



Billboard Advertisement, September-October 2008

Building Communities

Unnatural Causes, PBS Series

Unnatural Causes, a four-part PBS series about how the social circumstances in which we are born, live and work can impact our health was aired nationally in March on WJCT.

Many of the segments pertained to the mission of the Healthy Start Coalition. *When the Bough Breaks* highlighted the racial disparities in infant mortality, while *Place Matters* suggested where we live impacts our health and wellbeing. The Duval County Health Department, along with other partnering agencies, have dedicated their time and effort into hosting viewings and town hall meetings to involve the community as a whole, as well as the neighborhoods most impacted.



Jacksonville Community Council Inc Studies Infant Mortality

The Jacksonville Community Council Inc (JCCI) examined the high infant mortality rate in Jacksonville in 2007-08. A community-based study group of more than 50 people looked at the causes and solutions involving the deaths of infants less than one-year-old. The study wrapped up in May with strong research, conclusions and recommendations. The study showed that the core root causes of infant mortality are deeply entrenched in the socioeconomic structures that are related to racism and other social factors in this community. Information was given to the study group by well-known maternal and child health experts throughout the state and nation.

The study was released with a strong conclusion that stated “The failure of our community to address the longstanding issues of racism, poverty and socioeconomic disparities is killing our babies.” Infant mortality is a sentinel indicator of the health and wellness of a community.

The JCCI study group settled on 15 recommendations the community could do to improve the health and wellbeing of women, children and families in Jacksonville. The recommendations range from eradicating food deserts, expanding evidence-based sex education in public schools, coordinating strong partnerships, spreading the message through local media and the sustaining of the Black Infant Health Community Council, a Healthy Start initiative. Starting in Fall 2008, the implementation phase of the study was launched with committees tackling each recommendation.

Building Communities

Healthy Start Provided Services to Thousands

Healthy Start case management services were provided to more than 4,650 pregnant women and 1,650 at-risk infants in Northeast Florida during 2007-08. A focused effort was implemented by Healthy Start providers this year to ensure intensive services were provided to families at highest risk.

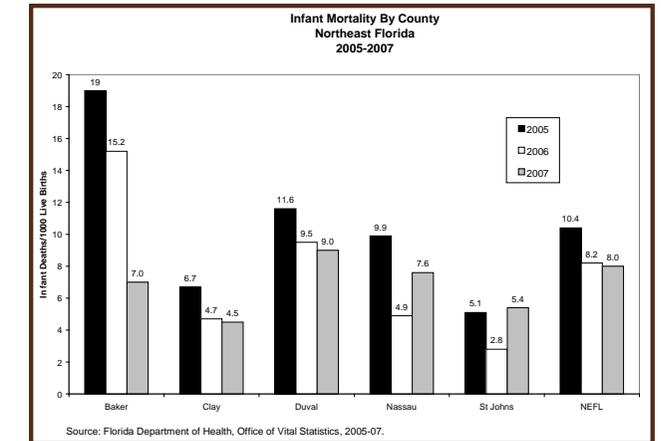
Nurses, social workers and family support workers are employed by Healthy Start agencies to link at-risk women and infants with health care and other risk reduction services available in the community. Healthy Start staff provides on-going education and support to increase the chances of a healthy birth and promote positive child development. The program works closely with Healthy Families and other child-serving agencies to ensure families get the services they need to be successful.



Duval County Health Department - Healthy Start



Shands Jacksonville - Healthy Start

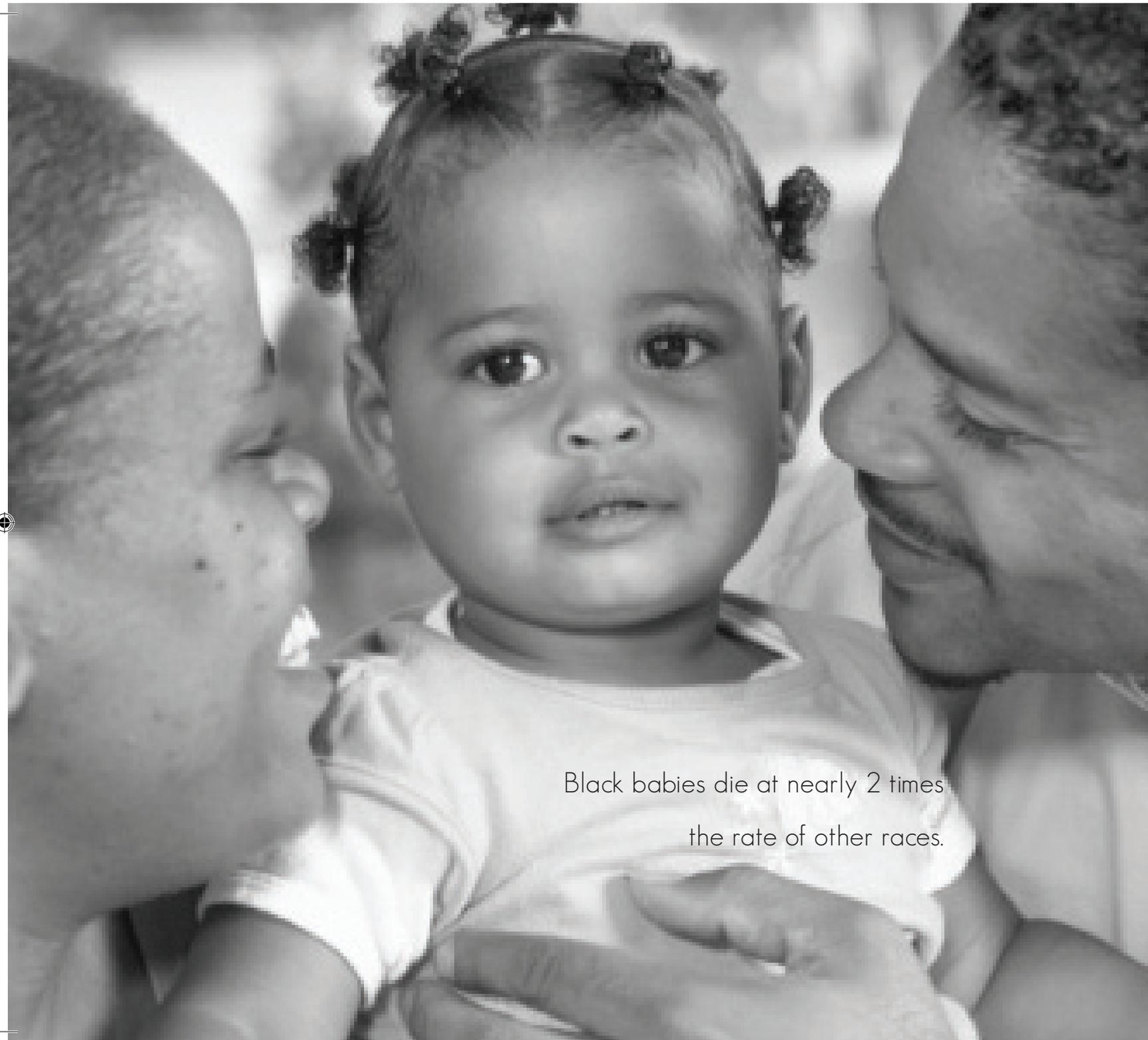


Consecutive Drop in 2008 Infant Mortality Rates

The 2007-08 Project Impact report was released by the Coalition in October. The publication reports on a fetal and infant mortality review (FIMR) project for Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns Counties. The goal of FIMR is to reduce infant mortality by gathering and reviewing detailed information to gain a better understanding of fetal and infant deaths in the region.

It reported the 2007 infant mortality rate remained at its lowest level in more than a decade with improvements posted in three of the region's five counties. The area's infant death rate was eight deaths per 1,000 live births in 2007 compared to 8.2 deaths per 1,000 in 2006 and 10.4 deaths per 1,000 in 2005.

The two-fold gap between black and white outcomes remained unchanged during 2007. Nearly six white babies per 1,000 died before their first birthday compared to 12 black babies in Northeast Florida.



Black babies die at nearly 2 times
the rate of other races.

Building Communities

Black Infant Health Initiative: State & Local

The Black Infant Health Practice Initiative was created out of House Bill 1269 and launched in January 2008 to determine the medical and social factors contributing to the elevated rates of infant death among black infants in Florida and to develop community-based strategies and recommend policy changes at the local and state level to address the disparity. Duval County was one of eight counties that participated in the initiative.

The Black Infant Health Community Council was created as a result of the initiative. The council, now with nearly 40 members, will guarantee a sustained effort in the Duval County area is present.

The goal of the council is to increase community knowledge about factors that contribute to black infant death and promote community action - through advocacy, education, philanthropy, political will and effective community partnerships - to improve the health of black infants and women of childbearing age in Duval County.

Three subcommittees were formed to address the needs in the area. Each of the members was updated on the facts, as well as the social determinants that contribute to the death of our babies. Each committee will work on specific objectives in the strategic action plan and will help educate, empower and mobilize the black community to ensure better birth outcomes.

Events have been held to educate families about infant mortality, as well as collect information from them to ensure the right message is delivered to the community impacted by the problem.



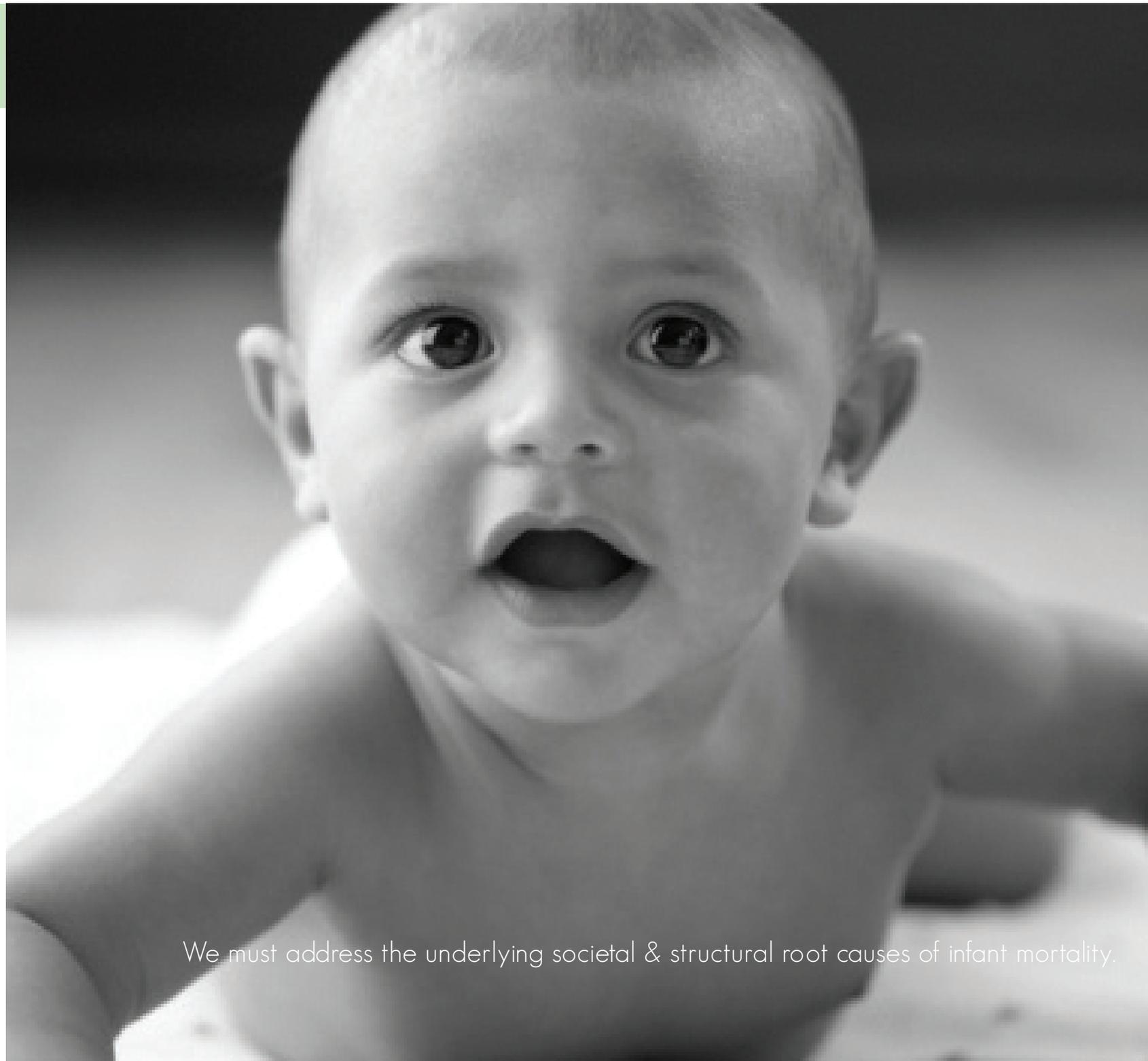
Walmart Educational Event, October 2008

Community Voice: Taking it to the People

This Spring, the Healthy Start Coalition hosted a training for more than 30 people throughout the state, to introduce the *Community Voice* program.

Community Voice was created in 2000 to address the infant mortality rate in Lynchburg, Virginia for African Americans. The program increases community awareness, delivers perinatal information, promotes healthcare, motivates people and encourages lifestyle change for mothers. "Taking it to the People" is a grassroots curriculum used to communicate effectively by providing community awareness and information on perinatal issues.





We must address the underlying societal & structural root causes of infant mortality.

Saving Babies

Healthy Start Contracts with Local Agencies

Agencies providing Healthy Start services during 2007-08 included the five county health departments in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns Counties; the Bridge of Northeast Florida; Children's Home Society; Shands Jacksonville; Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies of Northeast Florida; and Gateway Community Services.

These agencies provided case management and other services, including nutrition counseling, breastfeeding education and support, childbirth education and parenting, psychosocial counseling and interconceptional counseling and education, to at-risk pregnant women and families in Northeast Florida.

State law requires prenatal care providers and delivering hospitals to screen pregnant women and newborns for the Healthy Start program. Factors associated with poor outcomes or developmental delays are included on the screening form.

Program participants receive a comprehensive assessment of their needs and ongoing support and education, as well as referrals to other community services.



Baker County Health Department - Healthy Start



Clay County Health Department - Healthy Start



St. Johns County Health Department - Healthy Start



Nassau County Health Department - Healthy Start

Saving Babies



Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies of Northeast Florida, Inc.



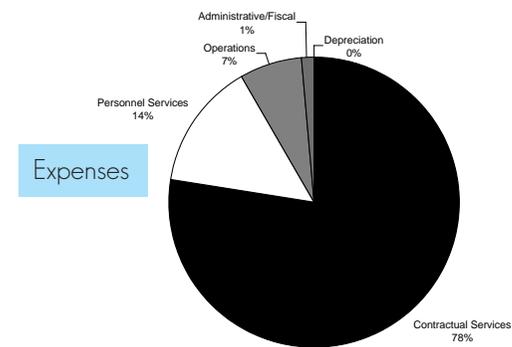
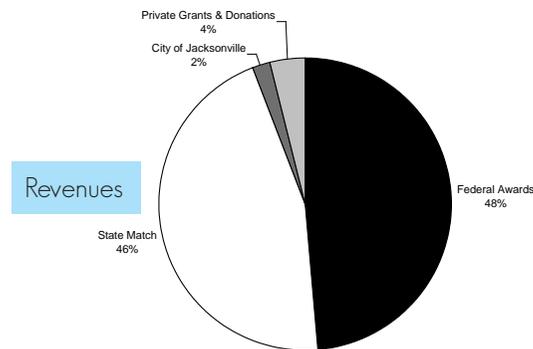
Children's Home Society - Healthy Start

MomCare Links Pregnant Women with Care

More than 13,770 pregnant women received health insurance and assistance in obtaining prenatal care in 2008 through MomCare, a special counseling and education program funded by Medicaid. Women enrolled in Medicaid receive help in identifying a provider, making prenatal appointments, as well as information about Women Infants & Children (WIC), Florida KidCare and other services.

This year, MomCare received significant reimbursement cuts due to Florida's budget crisis. It resulted in a \$60,000 loss in the MomCare's 2007-08 budget.

2007 - 2008 Coalition Budget \$5,190,250



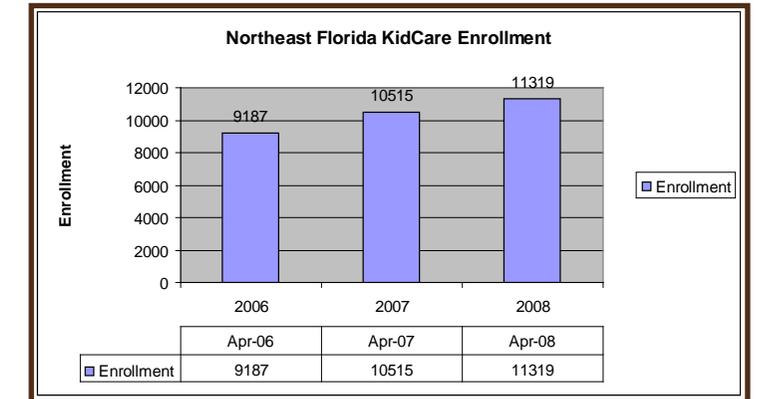
Strengthening Families

KidCare Outreach Remained Constant in 2008

The state legislature provided funding for an additional 38,000 slots in the Florida KidCare program for the 2008-09 fiscal year, but cut the program that provided outreach grants. Since the inception of state-funded outreach, Florida KidCare enrollment in Northeast Florida jumped 19 percent, from 9,187 in April 2006 to 11,319 in April 2008.

During 2007-08, Wolfson Children's Hospital subcontracted with the Coalition to provide direct assistance to families who needed help enrolling in the low-cost children's health insurance program. A cadre of outreach staff worked to publicize the program through community outreach events and partnerships with child-serving agencies. Local organizations, including the DuPont Fund, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Nemours Children's Clinic, Baptist Health and the Jacksonville Children's Commission, provided local match funding, enabling Wolfson to receive state outreach funding.

Outreach workers participated in approximately 20 events and presentations each month and worked with more than 700 families in the application process.



Real Dad, Real Man - New Male Initiative

Real Dad, Real Man had its kick-off meeting in May to address the issue of responsible fatherhood. The initiative's goal is to enhance and expand collaboration among existing fatherhood initiatives. The group is led by the Coalition and has participants from all of the five counties. Many of the counties have responsible fatherhood initiatives and this will help link each group's activities and efforts.

The mission of Real Dad, Real Man is to bring into conversation the father or father-figure role in each child's life. It will provide male support, referrals and training on male responsibility issues, as well as recognize and acknowledge responsible fathers for their positive efforts and contributions in ensuring a healthy birth outcome and successful childhood.

Florida ranks
nearly LAST
in access to children's
health care...



Unmarried mothers are less likely to obtain prenatal care & more likely to have a low birthweight baby.

Strengthening Families

Magnolia Project Serves 700 Women

The Magnolia Project is a prenatal and interconceptional initiative aimed at reducing racial disparities in infant mortality by providing targeted outreach, screening, case management and risk reduction, health education, prenatal and well-woman care in an at-risk, predominantly African American community in northwest Jacksonville. Funded by the federal Healthy Start initiative, the project serves 700 women annually and addresses specific risk factors and service needs identified in the local Healthy Start Service Delivery Plan and the area's Fetal and Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Project as contributing to high infant mortality rates.

The Magnolia Project, located in a store-front site, utilizes a collaborative service delivery model involving the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, the Duval County Health Department and other community partners.

The Magnolia Project incorporates community and participant empowerment in its approach to both service delivery and governance. It includes an active Community Council, made up of project participants and indigenous neighborhood leaders, that works to engage the community in addressing disparities in birth outcomes.

WJCT Women's Health Conference

More than 1,200 women attended the seventh annual Speaking of Women's Health Conference hosted by WJCT Public Broadcasting and Baptist Health. The Magnolia Project was recognized with a \$5,000 check for its outstanding work in the community. The funding was earmarked for the upcoming social marketing campaign to promote women's health and wellness.

Spring Celebration, Health Fair & Ribbon Cutting

The Magnolia Project opened its doors in Pearl Plaza this year and celebrated its new location with a Spring Celebration & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. It featured special guest Ana Viamonte Ros, MD, MPH, State Surgeon General. The Spring Celebration, held on April 12, drew more than 200 people from the community, city and state.

Local support was tremendous. Jacksonville City Council members, Dr. Johnny Gaffney and Mia Jones, and former City Council members, Gwen Yates and Pat Lockett-Felder, attended the community event. Director of Florida's Office of Minority Health, Dr. Emile Commedore, and U.S. Representative Corrine Brown also showed strong support for the project.



Magnolia Project Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, April 2008



The health of a woman
prior to pregnancy
has the largest impact on
birth outcomes.

Strengthening Families

Azalea Project Received Local Support

The Azalea Project continued its outreach to substance-involved families at risk of acquiring HIV in 2008 with continued support from the state Healthy Start program, the City of Jacksonville and the Women's Giving Alliance. The special initiative offers education and support at a store-front site in Springfield. Gateway Community Services provides two co-located case managers through a contract with Healthy Start to serve substance-affected pregnant women.

City funding supports an additional case manager who focuses on at-risk women of childbearing age who are not pregnant. The Public Services Grants Council of the City of Jacksonville recommended \$61,983 in continued funding for the project in 2008-09. Support from the Women's Giving Alliance enables the project to employ a community outreach worker who assists in locating and engaging participants who are referred for project services. The Azalea Project works closely with the Healthy Start programs at the Duval County Health Department and Shands Jacksonville, as well as local substance abuse treatment providers. More than 100 women were assisted through the project in 2008.



Gateway Community Service, Azalea Healthy Start

Events Were Hosted in Honor of Azalea Participants

The Azalea Project honored National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day by educating and increasing awareness within the community at an open house with free HIV testing, educational materials, food and music. Red balloons lined the site on Market and Eighth Street, which stand for the many lives touched by HIV/AIDS.

A birthday celebration was held for all of the babies born to the Azalea Project and in remembrance of National Infant Mortality Awareness Month. Past and present participants of the project were there with their children. The families were treated to food and games, while the kids could have their faces painted and play with the other children in a safe and fun environment.



Azalea Birthday Celebration, September 2008 - Metro Park