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**The Magnolia Project, an initiative of the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, is one of 87 organizations nationally to receive funding from HHS to reduce infant mortality**

Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell today released $65 million in grants to help 87 organizations in 33 states reduce high infant mortality rates and other health problems related to pregnancy and mothers’ health.

The Magnolia Project has been in existence since 1999 and has a proven track record at reducing infant mortality in a high risk area of Jacksonville INSERT ZIPS. Healthy Start is targeted to the needs of vulnerable mothers and infants in areas of the country with disproportionately high rates of infant mortality.  Twenty-two of these awardees serve rural communities, four will serve the United States-Mexico border, and three programs will serve a predominately Native American population.  Also, 22 organizations will be using these funds to create Healthy Start programs for the first time.

“These funds will help to empower pregnant women by giving them the resources they need to improve their own health and the health of their babies,” said Secretary Burwell.

­­­### women in Health Zone 1, INSERT ZIPS, Duval County will benefit from these services and more than 56,000 women and children will benefit from these services nationally.

The Healthy Start program, which is managed by HHS’ Health Resources and Services Administration, began in 1991 but has been redesigned to use evidence-based strategies and to improve program performance. Applicants for this grant cycle were required to design programs around five key strategies that have been found to reduce health disparities and adverse perinatal outcomes. All grantees are required to undertake specific activities under each strategy:

* Improve women’s health, with a focus on access to care
* Promote quality services
* Strengthen family resilience
* Achieve collective community impact
* Increase program accountability

“This transformation of Healthy Start will help communities with high infant mortality rates work more effectively to improve maternal health and birth outcomes.” said Mary Wakefield, Ph.D., R.N., administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration.

For more information about the Magnolia Project, visit: http://nefhealthystart.org/for-women/magnolia-project/

For a list of awardees, visit: <http://www.hrsa.gov/about/news/2014tables/healthystart/>

To learn more about HRSA’s Healthy Start Program, visit <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/healthystart/index.html>