

CARING FOR 2: ALL BABIES MATTER

JULY 2012

WELCOME

The health of infants and mothers is central to the mission of Columbus Public Health. We know that health is more than health care. Inadequate access to care, unequal treatment, limited access to education, livable incomes, safe housing, and racism all contribute to a system that perpetuates poor health outcomes for babies and their families.

Columbus Public Health and our many partners are working to address these factors by serving families, involving the community and building better systems of care. Progress can be made only if we all work together.

We hope this quarterly newsletter will inform, educate and connect the many organizations and individuals concerned with making an impact on infant health.

*Teresa C. Long, MD, MPH
Health Commissioner, City of Columbus*

IN THIS ISSUE

In this our first issue, we introduce you to some of our families, describe the work of the Columbus Action Learning Collaborative working to reduce disparities in perinatal outcomes, and feature our safe sleep initiative and breastfeeding guidelines.

Caring for 2 is building a system of care with our Local Health System Action Plan through community engagement and education to improve birth outcomes in Columbus and beyond to ensure that the lives of all babies matter. Our hope is that this newsletter will help expand our network and spread the word about this critical work.

*Grace Kolliesuah, MSW, LSW
Project Director, Caring for 2*

CARING FOR 2 IN FOCUS

Caring for 2 (CF2) at Columbus Public Health is a federally funded Healthy Start Project working to improve poor birth outcomes and eliminate disparity in perinatal health. The Core Services of outreach, case management, health education, interconceptional care and perinatal depression screening are strategies used to address infant mortality. The population served is African American women who are at risk of poor birth outcomes who reside in three Columbus neighborhoods.

Case management services are provided through home visits by public health nurse led interdisciplinary teams of licensed social workers and community care coordinators. Key services include assessment and education on prenatal care, smoking cessation, domestic violence, maternal depression, Safe Sleep, breastfeeding, nutrition and support to promote self-sufficiency. The program serves an average of 170 women annually from pregnancy to baby's 2nd birthday.

CF2 has enhanced the local health system through much celebrated initiatives that have involved community engagement and education to improve access to care, decrease risks of infant sleep related deaths, increase maternal depression screening and treatment and elimination of racial inequalities in infant mortality.

If you or someone you know thinks she may be pregnant, please call (614) 645-7068 to link with Caring For 2 or another home visiting program.

CARING FOR 2

MEET OUR MOMS

Kristi Lamb

Kristi Lamb became a participant of Caring for 2 when she was six weeks pregnant with her sixth child. She was referred to CF2 by the Moms2B program, a weekly nutritional program. After meeting the Caring for 2 nurse and social worker, Kristi felt it was a perfect fit, saying, "I felt surrounded by such sincere, strong women." Kristi received resources and education she needed during her pregnancy and gave birth to a full-term, 6 lbs. 11 oz. baby boy in 2011.



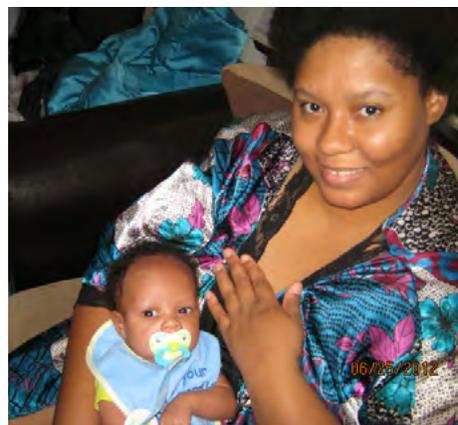
When a new CF2 Community Outreach Worker was needed, Kristi's CF2 Nurse suggested Kristi apply because of her program experiences, parenting style and education. Kristi, now a CF2 Outreach Worker is networking in the community, promoting the program, and recruiting new participants.

Natasha Fields

18 year old Nataha Fields a 1st time mom enrolled in CF2 when she was 18 weeks pregnant needing stable housing, resources and emotional support. She regularly met with her CF2 Social Worker, Nurse, and Care Coordinator to participate in program services. Her CF2 Case Management Team linked Natasha to housing resources and transportation, provided education on prenatal care, proper nutrition, stress management, breastfeeding and her baby's development, and helped her apply for a health and social service benefits. Previously estranged from her grandmother and father, Natasha now has a relationship with them. She is enrolled in school to earn her GED while volunteering at a funeral home with the goal of becoming a mortician. She is enjoying living in her own apartment with her daughter who was delivered full term at 7 lbs. 2 oz. Natasha states, "I am at a good place and I thank Caring for 2".



MEET OUR FAMILIES



Left to right: Chevon Herrington with son Tevayha; LaRhonda Gilbert with grandson Jayden; and Karlotta Butcher with son Kingston.

PARTNERSHIPS TO END DISPARITIES

Caring for 2 spearheaded the development of the Action Learning Collaborative (ALC), a Partnership to Eliminate Disparities in Infant Mortality (PEDIM). Its membership was comprised of organizations invested in infant health, including the Center for Healthy Families, City of Refuge Point of Impact, Ohio Department of Health, St. Stephens Community House and The Ohio State University. The work was sponsored by CityMatCH, Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs, National Healthy Start Association, and funded by the Kellogg Foundation.

The work centers around addressing racism and its impact on infant deaths. Recent activities have included data collection and analysis regarding women's experiences with racism in health care settings, and the creation of a toolkit for health professionals to engage providers to understand the effects of racism on health and infant mortality.

ALC brought in local expert Dr. Arthur James to conduct a seminar at Columbus Public Health. He is an Associate Professor, Clinical Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at The Ohio State University. Dr. James provided his view of the relationship of racism and birth outcomes for African American women.

Policy makers are critical partners in raising awareness of the issues surrounding infant mortality. The Franklin County Commissioners recognized the commitment of the Columbus Office of Minority Health and Caring For 2 in promoting understanding of minority health and infant mortality.

Link to these resources at www.publichealthcolumbus.gov



The Columbus Office of Minority Health and Caring For 2 received a proclamation for Infant Mortality Awareness from Franklin County Commissioners. With proclamation, shown left to right: Commissioner Marilyn Brown, Commissioner Paula Brooks, Ryan Johnson, Program Director, Columbus Office of Minority Health, Grace Kolliesuah, Director, Caring For 2 and Commissioner John O'Grady.



*"Every baby,
in every
community,
of every color
MATTERS!"*

*Dr. Arthur James
MD, FACOG*



BABIES SLEEPING SAFELY TAKES ALL OF US

The Franklin County Infant Safe Sleep Task Force is committed to educating the community on safe sleep practices and decreasing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related deaths.

The task force is a team of members from hospitals, clinics, community-based health and human service organizations, public health, and local and state government.

It focuses primarily on community education, working with healthcare and childcare providers, changing the images used in media, and preventing the use and production of unsafe sleep-related products.

If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, contact: Karen Gray-Medina at kareng@columbus.gov or 614-645-2134.



BREASTFEEDING: A GOOD INVESTMENT

Choosing to breastfeed is an investment in the short and long term health of the infant, rather than a lifestyle choice. Among its many benefits, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is reduced by one-third in breastfed babies.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, followed by breastfeeding complemented with other foods until at least one year, and longer if the mother chooses.

Pediatricians play a critical role in promoting the advantages of breastfeeding, as well as the health risks of not breastfeeding. Hospitals are also encouraged to adopt policies like “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding” to support breastfeeding moms.

Breastfeeding is a core service of WIC. New in 2011, WIC’s Breastfeeding Peer Helpers work in their local neighborhoods to support other moms with breastfeeding, mom-to-mom.

REFERRING WOMEN & FAMILIES TO HOME VISITING PROGRAMS - (614) 645-7068

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