



## *Winter Newsletter*

**The Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties** is a program dedicated to the health and wellbeing of local pregnant women, infants, and families. The local coalition is part of a statewide consortium of 32 Healthy Start Coalitions who provide services in all 67 counties in the state of Florida. The Healthy Start Coalition is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization led by a volunteer board of directors. Our services are provided by trained professionals known as **Healthy Start Care Coordinators**. Our Okaloosa County Services Provider is **Chautauqua Healthcare Services** and our Walton County Service Provider is the **Walton County Health Department**.

### Program Participants Learn:

- What to expect during pregnancy and child birth
- Baby developmental milestones
- Parenting tips
- Household budgeting
- Strategies to build a strong family foundation

### Care Coordinators Also Cover:

- Safe sleep practices
- Car seat safety
- Healthy nutrition
- Breastfeeding tips
- Smoking cessation techniques
- Continued support during the baby's first year

KNOWS WHAT TO EXPECT DURING PREGNANCY

HAS RESOURCES FOR 2-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER AND BABY-TO-BE

QUIT SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY

BEGAN PRENATAL CARE IN FIRST TRIMESTER

SUCCESSFULLY BREASTFEEDS BABY



In fiscal year 2019 - 2020 Healthy Start served **671** women and infants throughout Okaloosa and Walton Counties!

2019 - 2020 COALITION SUCCESSES

PRENATAL SCREENING RATE: 77.23%

INFANT SCREENING RATE: 98.80%

WOMEN SERVED: 471 Women

INFANTS SERVED: 200 Infants

TOTAL SERVICES: 14,901 Services Provided

VIRTUAL SERVICES: 984 Services Provided (Mar 2019 - Jun 2019)

INFANTS SCREENED FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS: 113

MOTHERS SCREENED FOR DEPRESSION: 801

Thank you to ALL the OB/GYN Physicians and Labor and Delivery Hospitals throughout Okaloosa and Walton Counties for participating in the Healthy Start Prenatal and Infant Screening process!

*Honoring Those Who Help Us Achieve Our*

We are pleased to share the following press release that recognizes three of our local labor and delivery hospitals for their tremendous support on our "Safe Sleep" for infants educational campaign.

## **PRESS RELEASE**

November 23, 2020

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*The Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties recognizes the Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital on the Emerald Coast's Family Birth Place, the Fort Walton Beach Medical Center's Women's and Children's Center, and the North Okaloosa Medical Center's Birthing Center and awards them for their dedication to the following Safe Sleep Initiative*

The Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties, with the partnership of the Okaloosa County Department of Health, honored three of our local Labor and Delivery hospitals for their hard work and dedication to our "Safe Sleep" for infants educational campaign. This educational campaign targets parents who deliver their babies in Okaloosa and Walton Counties through the use of the Charlie's Kids Foundation's board book, *Sleep Baby; Safe and Snug*. The Charlie's Kids Foundation's purpose is to reduce the SIDS mortality rate through education and awareness. Their book, which was created to teach parents the do's and don'ts of safe sleep, works as a creative safe sleep reminder during the baby's bedtime routine.

The goal of this project is to gift a book to all new parents and have Labor and Delivery Staff review the safe sleep education with them. Our hope is that parents will utilize this education, share the book with all other caregivers who may be watching their child, and ultimately reduce the number of sleep related infant deaths in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. Since July of 2018, over 5,000 families have been gifted a copy of the book and as of November 2020 we have seen a fifty percent decrease in sleep related deaths in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. We are extremely grateful for our partnership with these hospitals and the success of this initiative.

For more information on this safe sleep educational campaign, please contact the Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties at 850-833-9284.



**Pictured above: Staff and Administration from the Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital on the Emerald Coast's Family Birth Place**



**Pictured above: Staff and Administration from the Fort Walton Beach Medical Center's Women's and Children's Center**



Pictured above: Staff and Administration from the North Okaloosa Medical Center's Birthing Center

## *Maternal Intake Specialist*

After a year of planning, the Healthy Start Coalition has been successful in creating and implementing a new position titled **Maternal Intake Specialist**. This achievement would not have been possible without the partnership and support of the Okaloosa County Health Department and our Okaloosa County Healthy Start Service Provider, Chautauqua Healthcare Services. The Maternal Intake Specialist is located in the Okaloosa County Health Department's Clinic. This position was created so a personal connection can be made between a pregnant woman and the programs that offer valuable Home Visiting Services. The connection is made immediately following the confirmation of her pregnancy by the Health Department's Clinic, instead of waiting for the women to be screened at her first OB appointment three to four weeks later. The Specialist will complete intake interviews with the pregnant woman, share with her information pertaining to available resources, and provide vital pregnancy, health, and safety education. The benefit of this timely face-to-face connection is to provide immediate support and encouragement for women who are just beginning their pregnancy journey.

Currently, the Maternal Intake Specialist is Nancy DeJesus, who has been with Healthy Start Okaloosa for

the past 10 years doing translation services for the Hispanic community, MomCare, and Care Coordination. When Nancy meets with clients in the Health Department Clinic, they are often in shock because they were not aware of their pregnancy or they do not believe they are prepared for parenthood. Nancy's goal is to put these women at ease and help them adjust to the news about their pregnancy, so they leave her office with a



new optimistic perspective and confidence. Her position goes beyond paperwork and offering services; she is providing emotional support and guidance. Nancy says she is proud to be in this new extraordinary position and is fortunate to have the support of the Coalition, the Health Department, and her coworkers at Chautauqua whom all share her same passion for supporting pregnant women, infants, and new parents.

## *Emerald Coast Weekly*

On Sunday, December 6th, our Executive Director, Ardelle Bush, was interviewed by Ted Cochran, The Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce's President on Emerald Coast Weekly. Emerald Coast Weekly is an on-air magazine segment that highlights local nonprofits, events, and more. We are grateful to Community Broadcasters for giving our Coalition the opportunity to share our purpose, goals, and current initiatives with the community.



## *Hurricane Sally Relief Efforts*

On September 16th, 2020 Hurricane Sally made landfall as a Category 2 hurricane and caused significant flooding and damage to the greater Pensacola area. Healthy Start Coalitions from across the state of Florida made donations to provide relief to those affected by the hurricane. The focus of their efforts was on families who were providing care for infants in both Santa Rosa and Escambia Counties. The Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties worked as a hub to collect, sort, and organize the delivery of the donations to our sister coalitions in Santa Rosa and Escambia County. The donations contained Pack n' Plays, baby formula, diapers, wipes, and a variety of other baby necessities. We are proud to be one of the 32 Healthy Start Coalitions across the state of Florida who work to serve families no matter the location or cause.



**Pictured above (From Left to Right): Allyson Anderson, Executive Director of the Escambia Healthy Start Coalition; Ardelle Bush, Executive Director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties; and Martha Zimmermann, Executive Director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Santa Rosa County**



**Pictured above: Staff from the Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties stands in front of a Uhaul piled high with donations from across the State of Florida**

## ***Maternal Opioid Recovery Effort (MORE) Initiative***

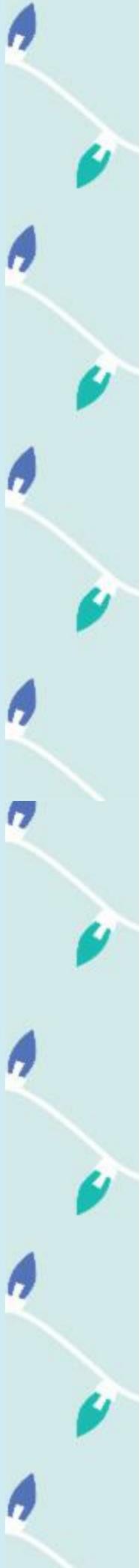
The Florida Department of Health recently released [data](#) on the continued increase in deaths among women of childbearing age in 2020. Based on the timing in preliminary data reports on overdose deaths, the Covid-19 pandemic may be a contributing factor. This suggests that



pregnancy-associated deaths may also be increasing due to Covid-19. In order to educate healthcare providers, the Florida Perinatal Quality Collaborative (FPQC) created the Maternal Opioid Recovery Effort (MORE).

The MORE project's purpose is to work with providers, hospitals, and other organizations to improve identification, clinical care, and coordinated treatment/support for pregnant women with opioid use disorder and their infants. The FPQC provided Healthy Start Coalitions across the state with MORE printed materials and links to presentations and webinars. These materials have been shared with local OBGYN providers in Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

To learn more about how to support pregnant women with substance use disorder, please visit [www.FPQC.org/MORE](http://www.FPQC.org/MORE)



# What every OB provider needs to know to save a mother's life



In Florida, drug-related deaths are the leading cause of death (1 in 4 deaths) for women during pregnancy through one year postpartum.

Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) is a life-threatening chronic medical condition with lifesaving treatment available. Every OB Provider needs to know how to screen for OUD, assess readiness for treatment, and complete an OUD Clinical Care Checklist to reduce risk and improve outcomes for every pregnant/postpartum woman with OUD.

## Key Steps to Improve Maternal Outcomes



Screen every pregnant woman for OUD using validated screening tool



Assess readiness for Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)



Initiate MAT and link to Recovery Treatment Programs



Provide Naloxone (Narcan) counseling and prescription



Reduce stigma across clinical team

## Important Resources for OB Providers

### SAMHSA Treatment Referral Routing Service

Confidential, 24/7, 365 days/year  
1-800-662-HELP (4357)  
<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

### UCSF Provider Warmline

Clinical consultation for perinatal providers  
1-855-300-3595  
9am-8pm ET

### FPQC Maternal Opioid Recovery Effort (MORE)

Toolkit & Resources  
[www.fpqc.org/more](http://www.fpqc.org/more)  
[fpqc@usf.edu](mailto:fpqc@usf.edu)

**MORE** Attention Support Services Follow-up Compassion

Modified with permission from ILPQC

## Upcoming Coalition Access Meeting

Our Winter Access

Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 20th, 2021**. The meeting will be held over **Zoom** at **2:00 pm**. Let's ring in the new year and welcome Kelly Mossburg, Executive Director of the



**Children's**  
Volunteer Health Network  
*healthy happy kids*

Children's Volunteer Health Network (CVHN). Since 2005, CVHN has provided quality health services for children including Dental and Vision care for children who may not have had access otherwise. In an effort to increase access to mental health services for children in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, CVHN will be adding Mental Health Service in 2020, 2021, and 2022.

There will be an opportunity for attendees to share updates from their organizations. To RSVP or sign up to receive further emails and updates regarding Access Meetings please contact our Community Liaison, Jordyn Autry at [jordyn@hsow.org](mailto:jordyn@hsow.org) or (850)833-9284.





On December 17th, staff from the Healthy Start Coalition celebrated the holidays at Painting with a Twist in Fort Walton Beach. Pictured above (From Left to Right): Sharlon Lopez, Coordinated Intake and Referral Specialist; Gisselle Bretz, Coordinated Intake and Referral Manager; Victoria Worlds, Office Manager; Ardelle Bush, Executive Director; and Jordyn Autry, Community Liaison

## *Amazon Smile*

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Walton Counties and the moms and babies  
in our community by shopping at**

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Visit our website

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