

2022 Spring Newsletter

A New Prenatal Care Program for Uninsured Women



L-R: NOMC CFO, Steve Davis; HS Executive Director, Ardelle Bush; HS Coalition Board Chair, Amy Herf; HS Special Events Coordinator, Bethany Guillory; NOMC CEO, Mike Nordness.

The Healthy Start Coalition has partnered with North Okaloosa Medical Center (NOMC) to provide prenatal care for women in Okaloosa County, who do not have access to pregnancy health insurance. The increase in the number of babies being born to mothers, in Okaloosa County, who received no prenatal care made reducing the late or no entry into care a

primary goal for the coalition. (SDP) Babies born to mothers who do not get prenatal care are three times more likely to have a low birth weight and five times more likely to die during their first year of life than those born to mothers who do get care. (*Prenatal care 2021*) Doctors can detect health problems early when they see mothers regularly. Referrals to this program are made by the Healthy Start Maternal Intake Specialists after identifying candidates who will qualify. The North Okaloosa Physician Group – Women’s Health’s office managers then coordinate referrals and deliveries with the coalition. To date, 20 women who would not have received prenatal care have been referred through this program.

*The Healthy Start Coalition supports The Walton County Health Department in their provision of prenatal care services for women without health insurance residing in Walton County.

References: Healthy Start Coalition. (6AD). Action Plan/Goals. In *2021-2026 Service Delivery Plan - Okaloosa/Walton* (p. 18). essay.

Prenatal care. Prenatal care | Office on Women's Health. (2021, February 22). Retrieved May 3, 2022, from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/a-z-topics/prenatal-care>

Florida Findings



In 2020, about 1 in 13 infants were born to a woman receiving late or no prenatal care in Florida.



Healthy Start Okaloosa-Walton's goal is to reduce the late or no entry into prenatal care from 5.1% (2019) to 4% or less.

The Brain Game

A big THANK YOU to Humana for their generous donation that went towards the purchase of a new guidebook for parents called, *The Brain Game*. This book was created by child development

specialists and physicians with a goal to help translate the scientific research on a baby's brain development, into easy-to-understand verbiage. A newborn's amazing brain comes with a billion cells and trillions of connections between these cells. By the end of the first year, there will be even more connections. It takes three years for the brain to grow to the approximate size of the adult brain. How well a baby's brain develops depends on many things: the genes with which he/she was born, relationships with others, experiences, and health and nutrition. The brain is very dynamic - it continues to change and evolve throughout life. These books will be given to our Healthy Start clients by our Care Coordinators.



**"While you may become a parent overnight, it really is a lifetime of on-the-job training. You keep learning throughout life because every child is different and every stage of life is different.
-The Brain Game**

In this guide a parent will find:

- Medically proven ways to enhance their baby's development
- Brain boosters for their child from birth to age 3
- Tools to track their child's progress
- Charts every new parent will love
- Activities developed by physicians that can change a child's life

[Click here to learn more about The Brain Game](#)

Community Events



As the number of COVID cases have declined and many restrictions have been lifted, more events and meetings are returning to in-person happenings. Staff members here at Healthy Start have been excited to get back out into the community to make important connections. It has proven to be a busy springtime season, as we have participated in several local events:

- *Bethany Guillory and Miranda Smolen joined 10 other community organizations at the Women's Health & Well-being Expo promoting mental, emotional, and physical well-being.*
- *Bethany and Miranda gave a presentation to the Women's Service Group at the First United Methodist Church of Crestview. This group volunteers their time to the Healthy Start Coalition by assisting us with the preparation of prenatal health risk screening forms.*
- *Miranda and Sharlon Lopez attended the Opioid Prevention and Awareness Event, at the Fort Walton Beach Boys & Girls Club. They shared information about substance abuse while pregnant and the lasting negative effects.*





Coalition Staff News

Meet Our Newest Staff Member



Miranda Smolen
Community Liaison

Miranda Smolen, originally from Fort Wayne, Indiana, graduated from Ball State University where she obtained her Bachelors degree with an emphasis in Health Science and a minor in Interpersonal Relations. She has lived in Florida a couple of times, totaling 12 years in the Panhandle. Although she spent most of her early career days working in Early Childhood Education, Miranda has almost a decade of experience in different medical office positions, most recently as a marketer for a diagnostic imaging office.

Miranda joined our team in January as the new Community Liaison. She has always had a passion for pregnancy health and the well-being of new mothers and babies. Miranda was already familiar with the impact of Healthy Start in our community and is excited to continue working with our OB-Gyn offices, community leaders, and partnering organizations.

In her spare time, Miranda loves to spend time with her blended family of 7. She enjoys walking, reading, and trips to the beach. She also likes attending community events or just spending a quiet night at home enjoying PB&Js and movies with her family.



Lorraine Colón Santiago
Healthy Start Care Coordinator

Lorraine recently received her certification in Mental Health First Aid Instructor Training. She will use this training to assist both her work associates and community partners on how they can help build mental health literacy and reduce negative attitudes towards mental illness. This program trains participants to identify and respond with a 5-step action plan, how to offer and provide initial help, and how to guide a person toward appropriate care if necessary. Healthy Start Care Coordinators utilize the evidence-based Edinburgh screening tool with our clients. *The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale* is a set of 10 screening questions. The scale can indicate whether a parent has symptoms that are common in women with depression and anxiety



during pregnancy and in the year following the birth of a child. **Congratulations** Lorraine on your certification, we appreciate you bringing this additional supportive knowledge to the program and our clients!

🌸 **Several of Lorraine's clients eagerly share their wonderful experiences** 🌸

Lorraine was working with a prenatal client that expressed her desire to **learn more about the actual child birthing experience** along with tips about breastfeeding. During visits with her client, Lorraine was able to create a birth plan with the client that she could share with her OBGYN. The client expressed her concern that the father of the baby was uncomfortable about staying with her in the hospital room while she progressed through labor and child birth. Lorraine provided the client with some helpful literature she could share with the father that outlined the importance of his involvement in both the pregnancy and the birthing process. These educational materials helped the father to gain an increased comfort level as he learned more about the significance of his supportive roll. He also realized that his participation in the birthing experience would create a stronger bond with both the mother and their baby. The client shared with Lorraine that everything went smoothly during delivery and that it was a great experience for everyone. She expressed her gratitude for all the support Lorraine had provided.



Baby-led breastfeeding is an approach to infant feeding that Lorraine speaks about with her clients. This approach takes advantage of a baby's innate ability to locate and latch on their mother's breast when placed skin-to-skin. It is based on the theory that human babies, like other newborn mammals, will instinctively seek and latch on to their mother's breast if given the chance – a theory known as biological nurturing. Recently one of Lorraine's clients expressed her desire to insert this breastfeeding technique into her birth plan. When Lorraine visited the client, after the baby's birth, the mother was so happy to report that the Baby-led breastfeeding practice, right after the birth, was an amazingly unforgettable experience. This was an opportunity that she did not get with her oldest child, because she didn't know this approach to breastfeeding was an option. She is grateful for the guidance that Lorraine provided

For many women, **communicating health concerns** with their physicians can be an intimidating endeavor and this may keep her from sharing important health updates that her doctor needs to know. This was the case with one of Lorraine's clients who recently moved to the United States. She had two concerns regarding the delivery of her baby. She wanted to tell the doctor that she wanted to have a vaginal birth experience as opposed to a c-section birth, which is what she had with her previous child. Also during the delivery with her first child, the father was not allowed to be with her during the procedure and she wanted to ask her doctor if he could be with her for either type of delivery this time. Lorraine helped her organize and write down her questions before her next prenatal care appointment so she could get the answers she was looking for. During their next meeting, the client told Lorraine that she was successful in asking her questions. Although she was disappointed to find out she would have to have another c-section, but she was overjoyed to learn the father would be allowed to be in the room.



The supportive and caring services provided by the
Heathy Start Care Coordinators are appreciated by
so many pregnant and parenting clients.

Are you looking for Family Resources?

Click the button below for our 2019-2022 Family Resource Directory.
If you would like a physical copy, please reach out to miranda@hsow.org.

Resource Directory



It is time again for the World's Greatest Baby Shower! This annual event, held at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center, is a memorable occasion especially designed for new parents, expectant parents, and their family members! Healthy Start looks forward to hosting this exciting affair that will welcome approximately 1,300 participants. The 50+ informative exhibits, numerous prizes, guest Swag-Bags, and refreshments all add to this lively and fun-filled celebration! Our goal with the World's Greatest Baby Shower, is to bring resources to new parents that will help them and their baby succeed, while showering them with support and congratulations.

The banner features several logos and text elements. On the left is the Humana logo with the tagline "Healthy Horizons... in Florida". Below it is the Eglin Federal Credit Union logo. In the center, the text "FREE ADMISSION" is written in pink, arched letters. Below that, "Thursday, May 26th" is written in a large, black, cursive font, followed by "5:30PM-8:30PM" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the text "SWAG BAGS • EXHIBITORS • SNACKS • PRIZES" is written in pink. On the right side, there are logos for Positive Chiropractic Solutions, CDAC, and Simply Healthcare.

Thank
you

to our
top
sponsors



NEED HELP PAYING FOR CHILD CARE?

Do you work/attend school at least 20 hours a week and have children under the age of 13 years?

Call (850)-833-3627 or scan the QR code to see if you qualify for assistance paying for child care! Our School Readiness Program is for children ages birth to 13 from eligible families. Our VPK Program (free pre-kindergarten program) is available for all children residing in Florida who will turn 4 on or before September 1st of the current school year.



1130 N. Eglin Pkwy · Shalimar, FL
850.833.3627 · elc-ec.org

Before all the baby talk, let's talk babies

When you choose to deliver your baby at Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast, our doctors and care teams personalize your care plan to deliver the care that's right for you. And with our Baby-Friendly® designation, on-site Level II neonatal intensive care unit, and connection to the Studer Family Children's Hospital in Pensacola, you and your baby have access to the highest level of pediatric care in the region.

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As you grow your family, you join ours.

Just as every baby is unique, so is every delivery. As your partner in care, HCA Florida Fort Walton - Destin Hospital's Women's and Children's Center provides a customized birthing experience that begins long before your first contraction and continues well after delivery.

Our maternity services are provided in a secure environment, and we prioritize your health as much as your baby's. We offer 24/7 anesthesia coverage, breastfeeding classes, centralized fetal monitoring system, couplet care, four labor rooms, 12 private recovery suites, infant security program, neonatal intensive care unit and postpartum nurses to care for you and your baby after delivery.

Please visit our booth at the World's Greatest Baby Shower!



Learn more at
HCAFloridaHealthcare.com



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