

# Starting Off Right

A Quarterly Newsletter from  
Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson,  
Madison & Taylor Counties, Inc.

SUMMER 2012



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## Madison County Stomps STDs

### Community Involvement is Key to Affecting STD Rates Among Youth in Rural Florida

Out of the 10 counties in the state with the highest STD rates among youth ages 15–19, seven are in rural counties, are within a 100 mile radius of each other, and are in the northern section of the state. Black youth in these counties are disproportionately affected by STDs. These findings guided the decisions of a High Risk Task Force that was convened in 2009 by Florida's HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Program (HIV/AIDS PEP).

The Task Force identified Madison County to be the focus of the pilot project because in 2008, Madison County had the second highest STD rates in the state among youth ages 15–19 and it has a majority of black students. Partnerships with the Madison County School District; Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison and Taylor Counties; and the Madison County Health Department proved invaluable to the success of the project.

The HIV/AIDS PEP collaborated with these partners to provide the following:

- **Beyond the Birds and the Bees parent training workshops** designed to teach parents to be the first sexual-ity educators of their children and to advocate for science-based, HIV/STD and teen pregnancy prevention to be provided through comprehensive health education in their district schools.
- **Positive Action Curriculum kits** for every Madison County School District school, which is an ongoing collaboration with the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative.
- **The Making Proud Choices youth education initiative**, which provided training to 56 adolescent girls and boys. The classes were facilitated by Merv Mattair and Tonya Bell. This evidence-based, comprehensive sexual health education curriculum was delivered in churches, the Boys and Girls Club, and a community center.
- **A local Leadership Task Force** was developed. Its members, who

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*Students proudly display their certificates after participating in the Making Proud Choices workshop.*



*Merv Mattair (right) inspired the FLDOE Summer Academy at the University of Florida with his informative and interactive presentation.*

## Community Involvement

*Continued from previous page*

are predominantly parents, were trained in delivery of information concerning HIV/STD, and in leadership skills and strategies. Twelve task force members delivered information to their peers in the community, reaching 140 parents and youth. The task force members also promoted the Beyond the Birds and the Bees parent training workshops.

Since launching the pilot project, Madison County experienced a 47.5% decrease in STD rates among 15–19-year-old youth in 2011, indicating they now rank 51st out of 67 counties in the state in STD rates among youth. This is a remarkable improvement from the 2008 data, which ranked them at 2nd in the state. The work of the HIV/PEP and collaborative partners in the county contributed to this decrease. Strategies used in the initiative, and evaluation results will be used to create a rural youth STD prevention guidance document that will be widely distributed in Florida and the nation.



*Parents and trainers celebrate the successful launch of the Madison County Leadership Task Force.*

**“Madison County’s Chlamydia rate for 15–19 year olds in 2011 was less than half what it was in 2007. It’s really amazing what additional awareness and education can accomplish,” noted Program Manager Craig Wilson.**

## Dads and Their Divas

*The Annual Daddy’s & Divas event reminded daddies how important they are in the lives of their daughters. Dads enjoyed guest speakers and all departed with a bag of goodies. The event was held at Jerkins Community Center in Perry.*



September is

# NATIONAL BABY SAFETY MONTH

[www.healthline.com/health-blogs/healthline-connects/september-national-baby-safety-month](http://www.healthline.com/health-blogs/healthline-connects/september-national-baby-safety-month)

## Newborns Gather Executive Support in Florida



Donna Hagan (seventh from left), president of the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions and Executive Director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison & Taylor Counties, was part of an important day in history as Governor Rick Scott signed HB 227, which provides a task force to address the epidemic of substance exposed newborns in Florida, particularly those that are diagnosed with Newborn Abstinence Syndrome, a withdrawal from the abuse of opiates and other nervous system drugs, or controlled substances used prenatally.



### Got Events? Get Connected!

As we celebrate the eagerly anticipated launch of our website located at [www.wholechildtricity.com](http://www.wholechildtricity.com), the Coalition wants to urge our friends and partners to utilize the Whole Child Tri-County Online Event Calendar to exchange information on a wide array of local events for families and for people who work with local children and their families. If you have news you would like to share, email it to [cjhutto@healthystartjmt.org](mailto:cjhutto@healthystartjmt.org), and we'll make sure it gets onto the website in the Community News section or the Event Calendar.

Visit [www.wholechildtricity.com](http://www.wholechildtricity.com) today to discover the Event Calendar and the many other incredible tools offered at no charge to all coalition members and community partners.

[www.wholechildtricity.com](http://www.wholechildtricity.com)



Smart phone users, scan this QR code with your QR app to visit the Whole Child Tri-County website.



## Healthy Start Coalition Celebrates Infant Mortality Rate Improvement

The annual infant mortality rate is always of great interest to the Coalition, our community partners, and the public at large. The Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison and Taylor Counties is pleased to announce that Florida's infant mortality rate decreased slightly from **6.5 per 1,000 births in 2010 to 6.4 per 1000 births in 2011**. There are still disparities between the white and black populations, however, which we are dedicated to continue to improve until eliminated.

## Florida KidCare Coverage Available for Qualified Dependents of State Employees

Beginning July 2012, children of state employees become eligible for subsidized Florida KidCare coverage, provided they meet all of the Florida KidCare eligibility requirements. If a family's

**Fl**  **rida KidCare**

income is less than 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL), the Florida KidCare family premium will be \$15 or \$20 per month. Please visit [www.healthykids.org](http://www.healthykids.org) for more information.

## National Breastfeeding Month August 2012

Join the "Everyone Can Make Breastfeeding Easier": 20 Actions in 20 Days campaign

Surgeon General Regina Benjamin has called on the entire nation to take 20 concrete action steps to support the removal of barriers to breastfeeding. The "20 Actions in 20 Days" campaign will highlight these action steps and implementation strategies for six major sectors of society: Mothers and their Families, Communities, Health Care, Employment, Research and Surveillance, and Public Health Infrastructure

Tri-County residents service providers are urged to visit [www.usbreastfeeding.org/NBM](http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/NBM) for details.



#### Board Members

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Cindy Hutto  
*Business Manager*

Lynn Elliott  
*QI Director*

Tonya Bell  
*Whole Child Advisor  
and Community Health  
Educator*



The best things in  
life aren't things.

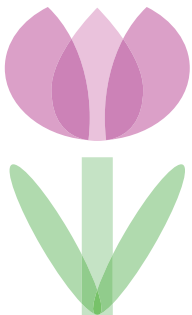
## Become a Partner Family today.



PARTNERSHIP FOR  
STRONG  
FAMILIES

Give your best to a teen in need in your community.  
Contact Partnership for Strong Families at  
352-244-1500 or find us on the web at [pfsf.org](http://pfsf.org)  
for additional information on ways you can help.

### Partner. Foster. Adopt.



**HEALTHY  
START**



*Healthy Start  
Coalition welcomes  
Bobbi Markiewicz  
as its new Jefferson  
County Board  
Member.*

### **Healthy Start Welcomes New Jefferson County Board Member**

Barbara "Bobbi" Markiewicz holds a PhD from Rutgers University and has authored or co-authored nine publications on Family Health and Child Well-Being. She has been with the Lawton & Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies at USF since 2004 as an Associate in Research. In that capacity, she has worked on several projects, all with the common theme of promoting

health and well-being for Florida's children and their families. A local advocate, Dr. Markiewicz was one of the original pioneer members of Jefferson County Whole Child, creating the strategic plan that forged many of the efforts currently underway to make Jefferson County a Whole Child Community. For more on the notable contributions of Dr. Markiewicz, please visit [www.healthystartjmt.org](http://www.healthystartjmt.org).