

# Starting Off Right

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

WINTER 2016



## In this Issue

*Healthy Families Seven  
Rivers Update*

Page 2

*Make a 'PACT' to Have a  
Healthy Pregnancy*

Page 3

*Healthy Start Spearheads  
SAFE SLEEP Education*

Page 3

*E-cigs Harmful to Your  
Health*

Page 3

*Certified Community  
Health Educator Continues  
Outreach*

Page 4

*Whole Child Offers Tools  
to Ensure that Every Child  
Thrives*

Page 4



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## Coalition Launches Five-year Plan with Renewed Vision

Happy New Year from Healthy Start Coalition!

The Coalition would like to take this opportunity to thank its members for their continued support in our mission of "improving the lives of mothers and children" in Jefferson, Madison and Taylor counties.

For the years 2016 through 2020, we have developed a vision for maternal and child health for these communities. We have several opportunities to make a considerable difference in the lives we touch, and we are committed to maximizing those encounters through our three home-visiting programs.

- 1) The Healthy Start program is under substantial revision at the state level to incorporate an evidence-based service delivery model. Our expectation is staff development and expertise that result in higher quality services and better

outcomes for the participants we serve.

- 2) *Parents as Teachers* services, offered to teens and first-time moms, graduates toddlers at age 3 who have the highest potential for continued optimal development, school readiness, and early learning achievement.
- 3) *Healthy Families*, the newest addition to our home-visiting cadre, works to provide intensive parenting services and resources to our most vulnerable families with the goal of preventing child abuse.

In 2016, we will work with our partners for the 0-5 population and collaborate to produce a **single point of entry** into these services, which will maximize our resources for our families, while focusing our impact.

Please join the Coalition as we celebrate our new endeavor, guided by our renewed vision:

### Vision Statement

By 2020, every pregnant woman residing in JMT is offered evidence-based home visiting services, resulting in the best start in life for her baby.

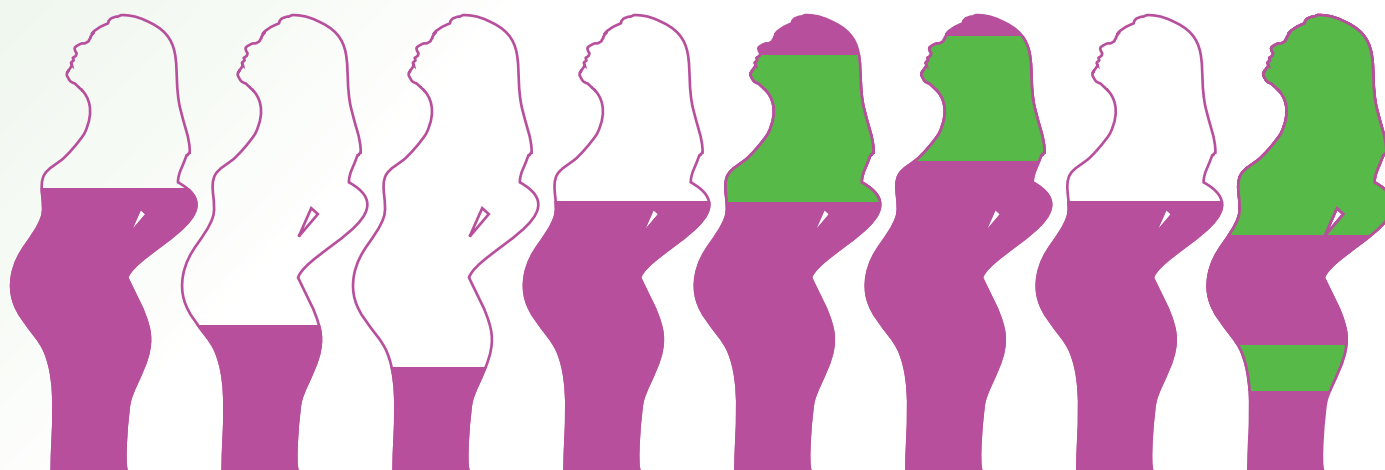
*During the Coalition's Annual Meeting, Executive Director Donna Hagan detailed the five-year strategic vision for maternal and child health, outlining the 2016-21 plan to Board members, staff, and community partners.*





## Healthy Families Praised for Strong Start

Healthy Families Seven Rivers (HFSR) is currently serving 21 families in their five-county service area:



**62%** of the women currently in services are pregnant with the majority of them having children under the age of 5 in the home.

**32%** of these women entered into the program in their 2nd trimester.

**23%** entered the program as a first-time parent.

**59%** of the participants are 25–29 years old.

**59%** identify with white or Caucasian; **32%** identify with black or African American; and **9%** identify with Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.

**68%** have never been married, **27%** are currently married, and **5%** are divorced.

**59%** of all participants have at least a high school diploma.

**18%** Hamilton  
**10%** Jefferson  
**0%** Lafayette  
**24%** Madison  
**48%** Taylor

## Healthy Families Team Sponsors Their First Local Outreach and Achieves Total Success

### *Over 500 pounds of children and adult clothes distributed to the community*

Clothing donations came from several faith-based organizations and individuals who work with families in need. Food and beverage donations came from Save-a-Lot, Snyder-Lance, and Aron's in Perry; as well as Winn Dixie in Monticello. Over 50 people attended the event, which was held in Greenville's Haffye Hays Park Pavilion. Eight tables were filled with clothing and shoes for all ages. Within 30 minutes, the majority of the clothing and coats were selected by grateful recipients.

Certified Community Health Worker Tonya Bell was also in attendance, encouraging attendees to exercise by completing laps around the Greenville Lake. Other services represented included Florida Therapy, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPPY), Big Bend Help Me Grow, and Big Bend AHEC, who completed several health screens with attendees. Tonya then followed her presentation with a trivia session that was met with great crowd participation. All remaining food was given out to the community on a first-come, first-served basis. The Coalition received great feedback from the community that encouraged them to conduct other activities in the park during the upcoming year.

"From the abundance of food and clothing donations to the community turnout, the event was a success. Those who came really enjoyed themselves and learned a lot of valuable information about our services," Program Manager Rebecca Severin was pleased to note.



**L to R: Tonya Cason, Rebecca Severin, Elizabeth Gooden, Erica Brown and Tonya Bell distributed warm winter clothing — and a whole lot of smiles — during the clothing giveaway. They also wore their folic acid shirts to heighten awareness for healthy pregnancy planning.**

## Make a 'PACT' to Have a Healthy Pregnancy

January is National Birth Defects Prevention and National Folic Acid Awareness Month. The new "PACT" campaign being launched by the Florida Department of Health is aimed at the more than 220,000 babies born in Florida each year.

One in 33 babies is currently diagnosed with a major birth defect before their first birthday. Although not all birth defects can be prevented, steps can be taken to increase a woman's chance of having a healthy baby. The department encourages all pregnant women and those who may become pregnant to make a "PACT":

### Plan ahead

- Before becoming pregnant, discuss your family medical history with your health care provider.
- Work to achieve a healthy weight and control medical conditions before becoming pregnant.
- Consume 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid — a vitamin that can help prevent birth defects — every day.

### Avoid harmful substances

- Avoid drinking alcohol and using tobacco products.
- Be careful with harmful exposures at work and home.

### Choose a healthy lifestyle

- Eat a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean proteins.
- If possible, be physically active every day.

### Talk to your doctor

- Seek prenatal care as soon as you think you may be pregnant.
- Discuss all medications — both prescription and over-the-counter — with your provider.

For more information about the prevention of birth defects in Florida, please visit [www.fbdr.org](http://www.fbdr.org).

The department also partners with the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN); the 2016 NBDPN Birth Defects Prevention information packet is available online at [www.nbdpn.org/bdpm2016.php](http://www.nbdpn.org/bdpm2016.php).

Also, please see next quarter's *Starting Off Right* for highlights of the local campaign.

## Healthy Start Spearheads SAFE SLEEP Education

There are three standards — ABCs — for safe sleep:

1. **Alone:** Babies should sleep solo with no blankets, stuffed animals, crib bumpers, or sleep positioners.
2. **Back:** Babies should be placed on their back for every sleep.
3. **Crib:** Babies should always sleep in a crib. They should never share a bed, and should avoid extended periods of routine sleep in a car seat, bouncy seat, or swing.

Parents and caregivers can reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related causes of infant death, such as accidental suffocation. SIDS is the leading cause of death among babies one month to one year old.

There are many things parents and caregivers can do to help a baby sleep safely. For a complete list of safe sleep recommendations, please click the following link to visit the Safe to Sleep website: <http://1.usa.gov/1sMq9Aq>.



## E-cigs Harmful to Your Health

Please consider signing up to receive the Tobacco Free Florida Daily. This collection of news related to tobacco control is a great way to stay up to date on current events and headlines. In order to sign up to receive TFF Daily, simply visit <http://paper.li/tobacco-freefla/1372085218>. On the right-hand side of the page, click on "Subscribe to the Email Newsletter."

The Healthy Start Coalition actively supports local Tobacco Free Partnerships.

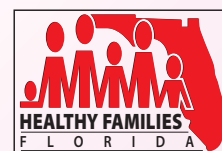
For information on tobacco prevention and cessation programs, please contact:

### Martine Young

Tobacco & Chronic Disease Prevention  
Specialist in Taylor County  
(850) 584-5087, Ext. 194

### Betsy Rykard

Human Services Program Specialist,  
Tobacco Prevention Program, in  
Madison County  
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## HEALTHY START

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Tangela Knight  
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Care Coordination - Jefferson  
Cumi Allen  
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Kristie Lutz  
850-584-5087 (Ext. 139)

Care Coordinators - Taylor  
Sarah Bayes & Linda Murphy

### Healthy Families Seven Rivers Staff

Program Manager  
Rebecca Severin, MPH

Family Assessment Worker  
Erica Brown

Parent Educators  
Elizabeth Gooden, Tonya Cason  
& Lynda Brown

### Board Members

Gladys Roann-Watson President  
Lucile Day Vice-President  
Ernest Bruton Secretary/Treasurer  
Jefferson County Members:  
Lynn Elliott  
Tomica King

Madison County Members:  
Bonnie Webb

Taylor County Members:  
Eric Scott  
Nichole Wilder  
Corrie Willis

## Certified Community Health Educator Continues Outreach

Certified Community Health Educator and Whole Child Advisor Tonya Bell participated in over a dozen outreach events during the last quarter of 2015, including presentations at Parents as Teachers parenting classes in both Jefferson and Madison counties. All women of child bearing age were invited to discuss health issues with the intended outcome of promoting personal and prenatal health, as well as emphasizing the importance of finding a federally qualified medical home.

Active with START activities in Taylor County, a segment of the Refuge House, she also participated in all Tobacco Free Partnerships in the tri-county area. Additional activities included the Healthiest Weight "Movin and Groovin" project in Madison.

Tonya invites all parties interested in more information on these and other Healthy Start services to phone her at (850) 253-5355.



## Whole Child Offers Tools to Ensure that Every Child Thrives

It is often said that babies don't come with instructions.

Actually that's not completely true. Certain instructions are built in. Parents, moms in particular, have chemical changes in their brains and endocrine systems that drive the feelings aimed at beginning the loving relationship needed for the baby's survival. But even beyond these basic considerations, there are easy-to-use sources of information available online.

One source of accurate information is the American Academy of Pediatrics. The following URL can be instrumental in supporting and enhancing the quality of parenting: <http://ow.ly/U3QHc>.

Hopefully, birthing centers, hospitals with delivery suites, obstetricians, pediatricians, and family physicians are providing this information to expecting mothers or those who recently delivered a baby. However, this is not always the case, and helping any that are not doing so to get started is important. Information can also be offered to drug stores, grocery stores, or to shops that sell infant goods. There is also considerable information available on text4baby's website ([www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org)).

Whole Child Tri-County remains dedicated to serve mothers and families; please call (850) 253-5355 for more information or to arrange a confidential referral to friends and family.



## Help protect your baby from infection during pregnancy!

February is International Prenatal Infection Prevention Month • [Click here](#)