

Starting Off Right

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

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Coalition Launches 5-year Plan

PRIORITY ONE: Maternal and child health planning, which includes a five-year cycle, a comprehensive needs assessment, and community input to create feasible strategies to address poor birth outcomes.

✗ Challenge:

Madison County has the highest rate of low birth weight babies (less than 5½ lbs.) in Florida at 13%.

✗ Challenge:

Jefferson County is second at 12.7%.

✗ Challenge:

Jefferson has the highest rate of black low birth weight at 19.2%.

✓ Accomplishment:

Taylor County has the lowest infant mortality rate in the state of Florida at 1.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

✗ Challenge:

In Taylor, white women smoke at a rate FIVE times higher than blacks (16.1%, compared to 3.3%).

✓ Accomplishment:

Rates of obesity have declined for all three counties, for all races from over 30% in 2007-09, to just 13% for 2012-14.

✗ Challenge:

Births to unwed mothers are higher in JMT than in other areas of Florida at 58% (eight out of 10 black babies are born to unwed mothers).

✗ Challenge:

Breastfeeding initiation rates for black mothers in Madison County is one of lowest in state at 37%, compared to 72% for whites.

✗ Challenge:

The white teen pregnancy rate (ages 14-17) in Taylor County is the second highest in Florida at 26.1 per 1,000 births.

✓ Accomplishment:

80% of pregnant women are screened for Healthy Start, making them eligible for free services to improve their pregnancy outcome.

✓ Accomplishment:

JMT meets or exceeds the state rate of 79.8% for early entry into prenatal care, a testament to the availability of obstetric care at the local health departments.

*All data is from Florida Charts and rolling, three-year averages 2012-2014 unless otherwise stated.

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HSJMT Launches 5-year Plan, Continued from Front

ACTION STRATEGY:

The Social Determinants of Health (SocDH) are getting a lot of attention lately. Most recently, the Departments of Health in Jefferson and Madison counties held community forums on June 21 and 22 to educate the community on how poverty and basic living conditions adversely affect health — especially infant mortality.



The World Health Organization (WHO) describes the SocDH simply as “inadequate resource allocation.”

The Healthy Start Coalition supports the county health departments’ commitment to ensuring we all understand and can respond to the compelling argument that where you live, what you eat, where you work, and how you play matters to overall health.



CAUSE and EFFECT:

The Healthy Start Coalition, in this new fiscal year that begins July 1st is addressing the root cause of persistent poor birth outcomes in these communities. Pregnant women in

perpetual poverty experience stress four times greater than their more resilient counterparts, across all races. Stress can become toxic, and this needs to be addressed prior to pregnancy, before the stress hormones cross the placenta lines and create havoc on a growing baby!

“Girl, you better recognize!” Campaign

The Coalition will provide group sessions to both pregnant and non-pregnant women on recognizing toxic stress. Sadly, many women who feel entrapped in lifestyles with no support system and perpetual poverty do not recognize stress as anything outside of their normal lifestyle. This is Step One — recognition of the hazard potential. Step Two is partnering with local hospitals, mental health providers, and substance abuse prevention agencies to encourage self-referrals to services to mitigate the problem. Otherwise, many of our women will self-medicate with street drugs to offset what may be a lack of coping skills.

OTHER PLANNED ACTIONS:

Preconception workshops using the Show Your Love CDC model.



Breastfeeding campaign to include Certified Lactation Consultants among Healthy Start providers.



Evidence-based interventions for Healthy Start, including perinatal depression, intimate partner violence, and substance abuse.

Centralized Intake and Referral (CI&R) for all pregnant women and infants. This transition will revolutionize how clients are referred and delivered to services, saving time and resources, not to mention convenience for the clients.



To review and/or download the entire document:

1. Navigate to www.healthystartjmt.org using your favorite browser.
2. Hover your mouse over or click on Resources.
3. Hover your mouse over or click on Documents & Forms.
4. Click on 2016-2021 Service Plan.

The Importance of Self-care in Parental Resilience

Of the six protective factors, parental resilience is the one with the greatest potential for behavior change, which is a common goal among the community partners in JMT. Specifically, for home visiting services, we are attempting to persuade parents to change — for the better — how they view the health and well-being of themselves and their children while battling obstacles and barriers that can be summed up as “toxic stress.”

Research has concluded that how parents respond to stressors is more important than the stressor itself when determining health outcomes for the parent or health and development outcomes for their children.¹ With this said, parental resilience — or a parent’s ability to cope and overcome stressors — can offset a lot of the damage brought on by harder-to-fix issues like poverty and lack of social supports.

Personal care is a deep-rooted concept of parental resilience; it is the foundation of one’s coping mechanisms. Personal care is beyond caring for one’s appearance; it takes into account mental, emotional and physical well-being. Motivational speaker Eleanor Brown said this about personal care: “Rest and self-care are so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.”

Many providers and families engaged in community services consider the sign of a good parent to be the degree to which they are willing to sacrifice for their children, while maintaining a clear demarcation between sacrifice of luxury and sacrifice of necessities. When working with parents, providers need to remind them that, when caring for others, it is important that they make time to nurture themselves. People nurture and care for others based on their own emotions. When one sacrifices sleep, personal hygiene, or health and well-being, they begin to nurture from a place of resentment rather than a place of love. Tones become sharper, words become harsher, and patience begins to wane. No matter what face one puts on when stressed, when he or she

doesn’t possess emotional and mental well-being, non-verbal communication will impact loved ones greatly, and especially children, no matter how young.

The best way to keep personal care at the forefront of a



Parents who do not take care of themselves cannot effectively take care of their children.

parent’s mind is to be a constant reminder. All stakeholders need to make it a practice to ask about parent stress coping mechanisms and personal care habits during every encounter. Initially, it will be awkward and parents may show resistance, but change is hard, so it should be expected. Parents who are out of touch with the concept of self-care may be provided with examples,

home assignments, and follow-up for future engagements. Remember, parents can make all the difference in the life of a child; it all begins, and often ends, with their parents, and a resilient parent makes for a protected child.

For a list of simple and free self-care ideas for parents, please visit Program for Early Parent Support (PEPS) at www.peps.org/parentresources.

1. “Parental Resilience: Protect and Promotive Factors.” Center for the Study of Social Policy www.peps.org/ParentResources/by-topic/self-care/self-care-for-parents.

Padraic Juarez Named New Health Officer in Taylor County

Padraic Juarez was named the new health officer for the Florida Department of Health in Taylor County. Padraic has served as interim health officer for Taylor County since 2014 and also currently serves as health officer in Wakulla County.

Padraic has worked in public health for more than 30 years, beginning his career with the department in 1991



at the Florida Department of Health in Jefferson County. Throughout his career, he has held various leadership positions both at the county level and at Central Office in the Bureau of Environmental Health. Here he worked as the liaison between the department and federal offices for programs under his supervision and has coordinated with all 67 county health departments at various times.

Padraic, a native of Colorado, earned his bachelor of science in biology from Colorado State University. He also has a master of science from Florida State University. Padraic is a certified public manager and a registered sanitarian, as well as the holder of several other state and federal certifications.

Please join us in congratulating Padraic!

Tonya Bell is Comfortable Wearing Many Hats!

Whether she's promoting exercise and relaxation after Healthy Families' week-long training, or volunteering at the Jefferson County 4-H Summer Day Camp — which included a fishing excursion to Beau Turner Youth Conservation



Center — Community Health Educator Tonya Bell brings it all for the people she serves.

Recently, she hosted Show Your Love Preconception Health workshops for each county, where she focused on facilitating lifestyle changes that ensure healthy birth outcomes. This notable task was among other community activities, including tobacco prevention rallies, elementary school parent outreach, and participation in virtually all local health events.

Tonya continues to develop her Certified Community Health Worker credential as



well, attending the 6th Annual CHW Summit in Orlando, where Healthy Start Coalition of JMT was chosen to be an exhibitor to promote Healthy Start programs and services. She also attended a week-long Healthy Families training and the AHCA Florida KidCare Local Coalition Annual Conference.

The Coalition is so proud of Tonya's contribution; please contact her at (850) 253-5355 or at tbell@healthystartjmt.org.



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Florida Department of Health First in the Nation to Achieve National Accreditation

Highlights from a FDOH press release dated May 17, 2016, noted that the Florida Department of Health has received first-in-the-nation national accreditation as an integrated department of health through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). This signifies that the unified Florida Department of Health, including the state health office and all 67 county health departments, has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards for public health performance management and continuous quality improvement. The accreditation is for all 67 county health departments, the Tallahassee offices, bureaus and divisions.

"Accreditation gives our local communities confidence that the county health departments are equipped to effectively deal with the public health challenges our communities and state face," stated Administrator Jennifer Johnson, Florida Department of Health in Jefferson and Madison counties.

Public health departments play a crucial role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities, providing a range of services aimed at promoting healthy behaviors; preventing diseases and injuries; ensuring access to safe food, water, clean air, and life-saving immunizations;

and preparing for and responding to public health emergencies.

Administrator Padraic Juarez in Taylor County dittoed his colleagues' messages, noting, "Accreditation is a confirmation that our community believes in working together to solve its problems, and that your health department is prepared to help this happen."

Both tri-county administrators also praised their dedicated staff, joining statewide leadership who strongly emphasized the team effort involved in the process. Locally, the efforts of Kim Albritton (Jefferson and Madison) and Kristie Lutz (Taylor) were especially noted as instrumental.

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), established in 2007, was created to serve as the national public health accrediting body, and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Learn more about PHAB by visiting www.phaboard.org.



Cumi Allen Earns Lactation Consultant Certification

The Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison & Taylor Counties wishes to express heartfelt congratulations to Cumi Allen upon receiving her Lactation Consultant certification. Lactation consultants are professional breastfeeding specialists trained to teach mothers how to feed their baby. They help women experiencing breastfeeding problems, such as latching difficulties, painful nursing, and low milk production.

Cumi serves Jefferson County from the local Department of Health. This credential is a notable addition to an already impressive resume of accomplishments!