

# MCAH Highlights

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Solano County Public Health Division

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## Co-sleeping and Smoking Identified as Infant Risks In Report



Some infant deaths are unavoidable, but better prenatal care, less exposure to cigarette smoke and following “safe sleep” guidelines for babies could prevent many deaths, according to a new report released in January. The Solano County Fetal and Infant Mortality Report analyzed deaths of Solano County babies in their first year and identified two top causes of death which are often preventable: premature births, and deaths related to

unsafe sleeping, including babies who die of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

**Prematurity:** A premature baby is one that is born too early, before the 37<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. While the causes of prematurity are not completely understood, several known risk factors include mothers who entered prenatal care late or had no prenatal care, and mothers who smoked. “Smoking nearly doubles a woman’s risk of having a low birth weight baby,” said Nancy Calvo, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Administrator. “We also need to address chronic health problems during pregnancy. Women who were obese, diabetic, had high blood pressure or other health problems during pregnancy were more likely to have a premature birth.”

**Sudden Infant Death Syndrome:** Infants who died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome had risk factors which included sharing a bed space with adults or children, exposing an infant to cigarette smoke during pregnancy or after they were born, and placing an infant face down to sleep versus the recommended placement on their back. Compared to Caucasian infants, African American babies were nearly twice as likely to die in their first year.

“In just three years in our county, from 2006 to 2008, we had over 100 babies die before their first birthday, and many of these tragedies could have been prevented,” said Calvo. Women can give their babies the best possible start by planning their pregnancies and taking good care of their health *before* they get pregnant, including maintaining a healthy weight, getting health problems under control and avoiding drugs and alcohol. Once they become pregnant, women should have early and continued visits to the doctor. Once a baby is born, it is recommended that all caregivers, including parents, grandparents, and babysitters, learn and follow guidelines for safe infant sleep. Safe sleeping includes the use of firm, flat bedding; putting the infant to sleep on his or her back every time; keeping secondhand smoke away from the baby; and having the baby sleep near (but not in bed with) parents or siblings.

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## Nurse-Family Partnership

## BabyFirst Solano



### **Happy Birthday, Nurse Family Partnership!**

The Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) Program completed its first year in April! In just one short year, NFP has enrolled over 100 clients and has had over 50 babies born while in the program! Nurses are handling at-risk clients with multiple needs and are helping ensure they have a healthy

pregnancy; they also continue to provide support and encouragement once the baby is born.

NFP helps transform the lives of vulnerable first-time moms and their babies. Through ongoing visits from registered nurses, low-income first-time moms receive care and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy, provide competent care for their children and become economically self-sufficient.

NFP helps clients like "Rosa," who needed help finding housing and food, starting prenatal care, and escaping an abusive boyfriend. With no family in the area, Rosa was confused, alone, and desperate. NFP's intensive model helps clients like Rosa who have multiple needs and provides the continuity needed to build trust. With the help of her nurse, Rosa has enrolled in Medi-Cal, started prenatal care and is getting her life back on track.

BabyFirst Solano continues its efforts to support women in having healthy and happy pregnancies. So far this fiscal year:



- ♥ 1,389 women were screened for substance abuse during pregnancy
- ♥ 567 clients have been enrolled into case management
- ♥ 237 babies have been born healthy and substance free
- ♥ 18 women have been connected with County Substance Abuse Services

BabyFirst helps provide support to moms who are at high risk and often have no one else to support them. As one mom said recently after being connected with a mentor through BabyFirst: "It's been a long time since I trusted someone". Another mom who was helped to quit meth and marijuana and have a healthy pregnancy, noted, "I no longer felt alone in my battle and got the help I needed to give myself and my baby a better and healthier chance at life. My boyfriend was allowed to be a part of (the Baby First Program) and included in everything I did which helped him prepare for the baby and want to make changes for himself. The best thing that ever happened to me was getting pregnant and being a part of the BabyFirst/ABC Program".

## Setting the Standard

The MCAH Bureau has completed an ambitious project aimed at making sure women in Solano County are getting clear and consistent prenatal and postpartum health messages. Starting in January 2010, MCAH Health Educators surveyed prenatal partners/providers about topics being addressed and which materials were being used. Based on results of the partner survey and in-depth review of materials, the Health Education team designed a comprehensive Health Education Toolkit which includes:

- **Toolkit Materials List** (12 main pregnancy topics and over 60 subtopics)
- **Samples** of all suggested materials
- **Health Education Topics Flow Sheet** (to help providers track how materials are used)
- **Referral Tracking Form** (provided to help document referrals )



The materials provided and suggested in the toolkit are comprehensive, have a low literacy level, are low cost, and are available in English and Spanish. Most of the materials are intended as a supplement to the health education the client is already receiving. In other words, rather than simply handing the materials out to clients, it is suggested that the provider talk with the client about the topic and provide the materials to reinforce the message.

In January 2011, copies of the toolkits were created and delivered to BabyFirst Solano partners for their use. Feedback from our partners has been very positive! Our plan for the future is to gain feedback once a quarter from partners, and then complete an assessment at the one year mark of toolkit delivery.

If you would like to receive more information on the health education materials toolkit, contact Michelle Carnahan at (707) 784-8619.

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## May Is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month



May is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month—and it gives us a chance to think about how far we've come as a society, and how far we have to go.

**The good news:** Teen pregnancy has declined significantly in Solano County and throughout California in the last 20 years. In 2010 there were fewer teen births in Solano County than in previous years, mirroring a falling birth rate across all ages.

**The bad news:** There are still far too many young women age 19 or younger who become parents before they are ready. In 2010, on average, one teen became a parent every day of the year in Solano, and there were five births during the year to girls age 14 or younger. Forty-nine adolescents gave birth to their second child in 2010, and seven had their third child. Two thirds of the young moms who had babies in 2010 received Medi-Cal, and only half had earned a high school diploma or GED.

### **You can participate in reducing teen pregnancy in a variety of ways:**

- Support teen access to accurate information about reproductive health
- Be an “askable” parent or support person for teens with questions and concerns about sexuality
- Be a teen mentor
- Promote opportunities for after-school activities for teens. Sports, church activities, scouting, drama, and many other activities give kids a place to feel safe, involved, and appreciated.
- Engage youth to look for solutions to problems like teen pregnancy
- Join one of Solano County's groups that are working to address teen pregnancy and other youth issues:
  - Adolescent Resource Network –contact Cristina Rios-Klein at (707) 784-8544
  - Synergy (Vallejo) - contact Jewel Fink at (707) 561-7793
  - Vacaville Youth Roundtable—contact Mark Mazzaferro at (707) 449-5371

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## How Does Marijuana Affect My Baby?

The Solano County Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Bureau has been reaching out to prenatal care providers to make sure they know where to access patient education resources on marijuana and pregnancy. Although many women are aware that cigarette smoking is harmful to their unborn baby, many believe that marijuana is a natural product that is less dangerous than cigarettes. In fact, seven percent of women receiving prenatal care at Solano County's two largest public prenatal clinics said they were continuing to use marijuana, even after they were aware they were pregnant. What do women need to know about marijuana and pregnancy?



According to the March of Dimes, babies whose mothers used marijuana during pregnancy were at risk of being born too early or too small, having problems bonding with caregivers, and having trouble learning to talk. Older children could exhibit memory problems, difficulty paying attention, aggressiveness and poor impulse control.

It is important to address the issue of marijuana use with all pregnant women. Women who are experiencing nausea with pregnancy can be referred to their doctor for solutions that will be safe during pregnancy.

The Solano County Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Bureau has a brochure called “Things Your Baby Hopes You Know About Marijuana”. For more information about this brochure, contact Michelle Carnahan at (707) 784-8619.

# Healthy People 2020 Goals Announced

**Healthy People 2020 (HP 2020)** is a set of national benchmarks that provide science-based, 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. For the last ten years, Solano County, along with the rest of the nation, has worked to meet the Healthy People goals established for 2010. Now it is time to continue to set our sights on the future by looking at the new goals, released in December, that give us targets for the coming decade. HP 2020 will continue to track many areas of maternal, child and adolescent health such as infant mortality, early prenatal care, and birth outcomes such as low birth weight and preterm birth. In addition, some new goals have been added thanks to our evolving knowledge about what creates the best environment for good health.



## *So what's new for Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health in HP 2020?*

- ❑ **Preconception Health** A woman's health before she becomes pregnant is a key factor in the health of her baby. HP 2020 goals include increasing the number of women of childbearing age who take folic acid and multivitamins, increasing the number of women who do not drink or smoke before pregnancy, increasing the number of women who had a healthy weight before pregnancy, and increasing the number of women who used contraceptives to plan their pregnancy.
- ❑ **Postpartum Care** New goals include increasing the number of women who go to their postpartum medical appointment, and decreasing the number of women who relapse into smoking after they give birth.
- ❑ **Breastfeeding** Breastfeeding has many health benefits for both mom and baby. The new HP 2020 goals also emphasize the importance of community support for breastfeeding, including: increasing the number of worksite breastfeeding support programs, reducing the number of babies who are fed formula in the hospital in their first two days of life, and increasing the number of babies born in hospitals that provide recommended care for breastfeeding moms and babies.
- ❑ **Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID)** While the nation continues to work on reducing infant deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), states have begun to track infant deaths from other causes, including accidental suffocation, strangulation in bed, and unknown causes.
- ❑ **Positive Parenting** Parenting practices can go a long way in creating an environment where children can grow up healthy, happy, and strong. Goals include increasing the number of parents who use positive parenting practices, read to their young child, and receive information from their doctors when they have a concern about their child's learning, development, or behavior.
- ❑ **Adolescent Health** Teens who feel safe and connected to their community are much less likely to engage in the risky behaviors that often accompany adolescence. Some of the new goals for teens are to increase the number of teens who participate in out-of-school activities and who graduate with a diploma, reduce the number of teens who have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug at school, and increase the number of teens who transition to self-sufficiency from foster care.