



MCFHC ENewsletter

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4,
SEPTEMBER 2008

What's in Enews Today?

1. National Health Observances:

September – National Infant Mortality Awareness Month

October - National Domestic Violence Month

October –SIDS Awareness Month

2. Hot Topics:

Flu Recommendations Expanded

Draft Rule Potentially Threatens Women's Access to Contraceptives

3. MCFH Coalition Updates

4. Web Resources

1. National Health Observances

September – National Infant Mortality Awareness Month: Last year was the first national observance marking the critical nature of the national tragedy of high infant mortality rates. Started by U.S. Representative Michael Burgess of Texas, the observance seeks to increase awareness that the U.S. ranks 23rd among industrialized nations in infant mortality and to garner community activism to reduce infant mortality rates. In Missouri, and St. Louis in particular, the infant mortality rate in African American babies is nearly five times the Healthy People 2010 objective of 4.5 per one thousand. African American babies are four times more likely to die before their first birthday than Caucasian babies.

In St. Louis, the Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) program of the Maternal, Child and Family Health Coalition documents the barriers to care that lead to fetal and infant death. Additionally, the Coalition is participating in a collaborative in the 27th Ward. The goal of the 27th Ward Prenatal Care Collaborative is to increase early and regular prenatal care by increasing literacy about the importance of early and sustained prenatal care through the provision of culturally relevant messages across a variety of channels, and how to effectively engage the health care system.

Another program of the Coalition in conjunction with Nurses for Newborns Foundation, the St. Louis Healthy Start program, seeks to lower the rates of infant mortality through early prenatal care, education, outreach and case management services. The program provides a means for program participants to discuss what needs to happen to improve their access to care prenatally and in the postpartum period. This happens in a consortium of program participants and providers.

For more information about FIMR, contact Rochelle Dean at rdean@stl-mcfhc.org. For more information about the 27th Ward Collaborative and St. Louis Healthy Start contact Sandii Leland Handrick at shandrick@stl-mcfhc.org.

Additionally, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has a brief on reducing infant mortality at <http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/brief%20infant%20mortality.pdf>

October - National Domestic Violence Month - The Intersection of

Domestic Violence and Pregnancy: Domestic violence can have devastating affects on women's reproductive health. It is estimated that 8% of pregnant women experience domestic violence during pregnancy and 70% of women abused before pregnancy continue to be battered when pregnant. Batterers can limit or prevent women from managing their own sexual health often exposing women to sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy and limited or delayed prenatal care. Up to 50% of adolescents experience intimate partner violence just before, during and just after their pregnancy. The association between abuse during pregnancy and low birth weights, preterm labor, miscarriages and cesarean deliveries has been found to be significant in several recent studies. Unfortunately, in spite of documented success of abuse screening, only 10% of doctors screen during a new patient visit and only 9% screen at follow-up visits. The focus of the national observance gives providers the opportunity to increase their own awareness of the damaging impact of domestic violence on pregnancy outcomes. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence provides fact sheets, resources for women to help protect themselves, public policies watches, position papers and reading lists. <http://www.ncadv.org/>

October - SIDS Awareness Month: Since 1994, the Back to Sleep Campaign has contributed to successfully lowering the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) rates by 50%. Unfortunately, SIDS remains the leading cause of death of infants one month to one year of age. SIDS occurs in all socio-economic, racial and ethnic groups but is 2-3 times more likely for African Americans and Native Indians. Ninety percent of all SIDS deaths occur before the 6th month of life. For National Campaign materials see First Candle's web site: <http://www.firstcandle.org/awareness/awarenessmonthhome.html>

2. Hot Topics

First Year for New Children's Influenza Recommendations: As we approach the fall and the start of the flu season, it is important to keep abreast of the new children's influenza immunization recommendations and to share this information with as many families as possible. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends annual vaccination of all children aged 5--18 years beginning with the 2008--09 influenza season. Additionally, annual vaccination of all children aged 6 months--4 years (59 months) and older children with conditions that place them at increased risk for complications from influenza should continue to receive the influenza immunization. Children and adolescents at high risk for influenza complications should continue to be a focus of vaccination efforts as providers and programs transition to routinely vaccinating all children.

The St. Louis Immunization Coalition (a program of the Maternal, Child and Family Health Coalition) hosts a Flu Information Line. The line has information about available flu clinics in the region. It will be up and running starting the end of September. The number is 314-644-4FLU.

MCFH Coalition Welcomes New and Returning Members:

Sponsoring Member -

Lutheran Family and Children's Services

New –

Women's Safe House, , Kate Barbier, Sarah Beaman-Jones, Barbara Floodman

Returning –

Teen Pregnancy Prevention Partnership, Lutheran Family and Children's Services, MO Chapter AAP
Katie Plax, M.D., Nancy Cibulka, Steve Fine, Brooke Sehy, Judy Wilson-Griffin, MO Department of Health and Senior Services, Leigh Tenkku, Visiting Nurse Association, March of Dimes

Visit www.stl-mcfhc.org to learn more about the benefits of membership in the MCFHC.

Draft Rule Potentially Threatens Women's Access to Contraceptives:

According to the September 2008 issue of The Nation's Health, the official newspaper of the American Public Health Association, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has proposed changes to the rules affecting organizations that receive federal funds. The potential changes affect the "refusal" clause allowing individuals and organizations to refuse women access to contraceptive services and information based on conflict with a provider's "conscience." The changes expand the definition of abortion stating that any procedure that "results in the termination of the life of a human being in utero between conception and natural birth, whether before or after implantation" is considered an abortion.

3. MCFH Coalition Update

Mapping a Course Community Report

Three community meetings were held to share the results of the community needs assessment initiative, *Mapping a Course for a Healthier Community for Women, Children and Families*. Participants reviewed the four key themes: poverty, access to health insurance, environment/place matters and mental health. Along with the results, portions of *Unnatural Causes*, a documentary on what is making us sick as a nation, was shared. Participants were invited to respond to the results and video and were given an opportunity to sign-up to participate in the action phase of the program. For a full report on the results, see the Coalition's web site: http://www.stl-mcfhc.org/images/docs/Mapping_Priorities_of_Community_Stakeholders.pdf

4. Web Resources

1. St. Louis FIMR annual report - http://www.stl-mcfhc.org/images/docs/FIMR_Annual_Report_2007.pdf
2. Fact Sheets on reproductive health and domestic violence: <http://www.ncadv.org/files/reproductivehealthandpregnancy.pdf>
3. Resources for National Domestic Violence Month including event ideas and materials: <http://dvam.vawnet.org/>
4. State Coalition Against Domestic Violence: Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, 718 East Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101, (573) 634-4161 Fax: (573) 636-3728, Website: www.mocadsv.org
5. SIDS Resources - Local resources and educational opportunities to reduce the incidence of SIDS in St. Louis - <http://www.sidsresources.org/>