



NORTH CAROLINA  
HEALTHY START  
FOUNDATION

REPORT TO THE  
COMMUNITY

2006

EDUCATE.

PROVIDE.

LEAD.

A close-up, high-angle photograph of a baby's face, focusing on the eyes and nose. The baby has light skin and dark, expressive eyes. The lighting is soft and warm, highlighting the texture of the skin and the contours of the face. The background is blurred, emphasizing the subject.

EVERY 9 HOURS

A BABY  
DIES IN  
NORTH  
CAROLINA

## LETTER FROM THE FOUNDATION

Dear Friends:

With our inaugural *Report to the Community*, we present a look at not only the current state of infant mortality in North Carolina, but the progression and continued work of our organization on the frontlines of this issue. Having just marked our 15th anniversary, we renew our commitment to further reduce infant death and disability.

Just over 15 years ago, the outlook for babies born in North Carolina was bleak. In fact, in the late 1980s, infants were dying at a higher rate in our state than any other.

Since then, progress has been made. The overall infant mortality rate has decreased more than 30%, and our standing along other states has improved. However, the fact remains that every nine hours a baby dies in North Carolina, and each year more than 10,000 babies are born low birthweight or premature.

At the North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation we are working on behalf of our state's smallest and most vulnerable citizens. We are dedicated to proactively addressing the widespread and complex issues surrounding infant mortality. From public education outreach and professional training to coordination with government agencies and community organizations, we remain committed to educating, providing and leading in our mission of securing the health and well-being of future generations of Tar Heel children.



Thomas J. Bacon, Dr.P.H.  
*Chairman, Board of Directors*



Janice A. Freedman, M.P.H.  
*Executive Director*





**5,500 MORE DEATHS**

HAD THE INFANT MORTALITY  
RATE REMAINED  
UNCHANGED  
SINCE 1988

## REALIZATION OF A PROBLEM

INFANT DEATH AND DISABILITY ARE INDISCRIMINANT — AFFECTING PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF RACE, CULTURE, GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OR SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS.

Though rates are typically higher among the state's minority populations, particularly African Americans, infant mortality is a problem for all of North Carolina.

*A concerted effort to address infant mortality began when North Carolina's infant death rate ranked highest in the nation in 1988.*

The response, led by then-Governor Jim Martin, was to convene a commission of government, business, health and policy leaders to address the state's growing epidemic.

The North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation emerged through a five-year pledge from Glaxo, Inc. to work alongside the Governor's Commission on Reduction of Infant Mortality, developing recommendations and action plans set forward by the group. For the next half-decade, the two groups worked in unison, implementing the first of many efforts aimed at instituting change. This included a comprehensive community grants program, legislative and advocacy efforts, business and industry initiatives and the Foundation's signature First Step campaign.

With the expiration of the Commission in 1995, the Foundation assumed a primary role in guiding infant mortality reduction efforts, working in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Together, we have been a catalyst and leading voice. Now in our 16th year, the Foundation continues to pursue creative, research-based solutions designed to positively impact the lives of the women and children across North Carolina.

### NORTH CAROLINA: THEN AND NOW

	1988	2004
Number of births	97,560	119,773
Infant deaths	1,227	1,050
Overall infant mortality rate*	12.6	8.8
Minority infant mortality rate*	18.7	15.6
National rank**	50	39

\* rates are based on number of deaths per 1,000 live births

\*\* 2003 figure



**30 PERCENT DECREASE**

IN NORTH  
CAROLINA'S  
INFANT MORTALITY  
RATE SINCE  
1988

INFANT MORTALITY IS OFTEN DEFINED AS A COMPLEX SOCIAL PROBLEM WITH SEVERE MEDICAL CONSEQUENCES. THERE IS NO SIMPLE SOLUTION, NO QUICK FIX.

Many factors, from access to health care and lifestyle choices to poverty and stress contribute, positively or negatively, to birth outcomes.

As a result, the Foundation coordinates a comprehensive, multi-faceted reduction strategy to confront infant death and disability. Focused educational and outreach efforts targeting minority communities and a campaign specifically designed to reduce Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) are two examples of our dedication to addressing the intricacies surrounding infant death.

*The Foundation's primary focus is prevention of infant mortality through public education.*

Targeted outreach strategies disseminate research-based information to professionals and community-based organizations working with at-risk populations.

Beyond public education, the Foundation provides professional training and technical assistance to other health and community-focused organizations, and advises key groups and statewide policy-makers.

Successful implementation of Foundation efforts relies on widespread collaboration with a constituent base including health and human service practitioners, legislators and government officials, community-based organizations, businesses and individuals.



## EDUCATE

**EDUCATE:**  
*to provide with  
information;  
inform.*

OUR MISSION OF ADVANCING INFANT MORTALITY REDUCTION EFFORTS IS REALIZED PRIMARILY THROUGH WIDE-REACHING PUBLIC EDUCATION OUTREACH.

Through development of educational materials, coordination of statewide education campaigns and a broad Web presence, we strive to continually raise awareness and promote behavior change. What began with the nationally recognized First Step Campaign in 1990 has evolved into one of North Carolina's most successful, and diverse, public health education endeavors.

### **FIRST STEP CAMPAIGN**

The First Step Campaign is the cornerstone of our education outreach. First Step draws on the critical relationship between a woman's health and the health of her baby featuring topics promoting healthy lifestyles before, during and after pregnancy. A new emphasis focuses on reaching women not only before, but between pregnancies.

### **N.C. BACK TO SLEEP CAMPAIGN**

Marking its 10th anniversary in 2004, the N.C. Back to Sleep Campaign leads the statewide effort to reduce Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Campaign messages reach beyond sleep positioning to include other SIDS risk factors including temperature

control, exposure to secondhand smoke and creating a "safe sleep" environment. Specialized efforts target high-risk populations, as well as non-traditional caregivers such as grandparents.

### **INFANT MORTALITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

The Foundation launched a new campaign in 2004-05, targeting 13 North Carolina counties highly impacted by infant death and disability. More than 100 health care, education, community and faith-based groups were reached as part of the outreach, which included a comprehensive public relations and advertising initiative.

### **MINORITY INFANT MORTALITY REDUCTION**

Infant mortality among the state's minority populations is increasingly high, particularly among African Americans. Foundation efforts directly focus on raising awareness and involvement of minority groups. A partnership with WNCU-FM (North Carolina Central University) to develop infant mortality related radio programming reaches African American and Latino communities across the state.



## ANA MARÍA CAMPAIGN

The Ana María Campaign, recipient of a 2004 Latino Diamante Award in Health and Science, is a Spanish language initiative that provides relevant health information to, and referrals for, Latinos. Messages feature pre-pregnancy and pregnancy health topics, promote publicly funded child health insurance and introduce immigrants to North Carolina's healthcare system.

## MEDICAL HOME CAMPAIGN

The Medical Home Campaign promotes the concept of children having consistent health care for their preventative, chronic and acute healthcare needs. Launched in 2004, the Foundation assumed a leading role in introducing this philosophy across North Carolina.

## HEALTH CHECK (MEDICAID)/ NC HEALTH CHOICE FOR CHILDREN

In coordination with the state of North Carolina, Foundation outreach programs promote enrollment in the state's publicly funded child health insurance programs. Since 1998, the Foundation has been instrumental in raising awareness that has led to a current enrollment of 130,000 North Carolina children in NC Health Choice.

## EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The fundamental component of our public education outreach involves the development and distribution

of high quality, research-based educational materials incorporating accepted principles of readability and cultural sensitivity. Distributed through printed and online catalogs, materials are available free of charge to healthcare and community groups, businesses, schools and individuals across the state.

Currently more than 50 items are available—in English and Spanish—resulting in annual distribution totals in excess of three million materials. Since the Foundation's inception, more than 24 million educational pieces have been delivered into the hands of North Carolinians.

## WWW.NCHEALTHYSTART.ORG

A comprehensive redesign of our Web site in 2005 created separate portals for health professionals, the general public and Spanish readers. Online features include: up-to-date statistics and infant mortality data, detailed public education campaign messages, digitized versions of our educational materials and links to additional resources. The site is compliant with Section 508 accessibility guidelines to ensure maximum readability and has been granted Health On the Net certification.



## PROVIDE

PROVIDE:  
to supply or  
equip, to make  
available.



SIMILARLY-MINDED ORGANIZATIONS TURN TO US FOR ASSISTANCE IN ENHANCING THEIR EXISTING PROGRAMS OR FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW ENDEAVORS.

Foundation expertise is frequently sought for the development of public education outreach components, identifying and providing the latest research findings or statistics, assisting with the development and review of grant applications and presenting at regional and national conferences. Recent collaborations include:

- **Infant Mortality Coalitions:** on-going support to local coalitions and task forces in Durham, Forsyth, Gaston, Onslow, Pitt, Wake and other North Carolina counties.
- **Sound Partners for Community Health:** partnership with North Carolina Central University developed radio programming for African American and Latino audiences that will be distributed through the N.C. Public Radio Association.
  - **The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:** partnership with the Department of Maternal and Child Health and the Center for Maternal and Infant Health promoted World Health Day 2005.

- **N.C. Division of Public Health:** collaboration on the production of an educational video and corresponding materials pertaining to sickle cell disease.
  - **Carolinas Poison Center:** assistance with the development and field-testing of new, bilingual educational materials.
  - **Health and Wellness Trust Fund:** collaboration on the development of materials to combat teen smoking and reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.
  - **Creative Use of Health Education Materials Workshop:** conducted for state and federally funded community-based organizations.
  - **International SIDS Conference:** featured presenter.
- Additionally, Foundation staff serve in various capacities with the State Infant Mortality Collaborative, WATCH, First Candle/SIDS Alliance, N.C. Child Fatality Task Force (Perinatal Committee), Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Wake County, Latino Alliance in Health Education, N.C. Perinatal Association, N.C. Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, N.C. Division of Public Health and N.C. Division of Child Development.

## RECOGNIZING OUR POSITION AT THE FOREFRONT OF INFANT MORTALITY REDUCTION EFFORTS, WE CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND PARTICIPATE IN INITIATIVES CENTRAL TO IMPACTING POSITIVE CHANGE.

Some of the more notable contributions include:

### **ITS-SIDS**

Addressing infant sleep practices in childcare settings has been a major priority. The Infant/Toddler Safe Sleep and SIDS Risk Reduction in Child Care (ITS-SIDS) “train the trainer” program, funded by the N.C. Division of Child Development, successfully contributed to statewide legislation requiring safe sleep practices, written policies and training. As a result, more than 30,000 North Carolina licensed childcare providers have received the Foundation’s training in three years, which is currently being utilized as a national model.

### **OUTREACH TO LATINOS**

Recognizing the importance of engaging the state’s growing Spanish-speaking population, the Foundation is an established and credible voice in the Latino community—communicating vital, up-to-date health information. Moving beyond translation of existing materials, we develop culturally appropriate educational materials, utilize television, print and radio outlets and host a Spanish language version of our Web site ([www.nchealthystart.org/enespanol](http://www.nchealthystart.org/enespanol)).

### **FOLIC ACID PROMOTION**

Since 1997, the Foundation has maintained efforts through our First Step campaign to promote that

women of reproductive age take a multivitamin for the reduction of birth defects. As a founding member of the N.C. Folic Acid Council, the Foundation has assisted in the development and implementation of several initiatives.


### **STATE INFANT MORTALITY COLLABORATIVE**

As a member of the newly formed State Infant Mortality Collaborative, the Foundation led the development and coordination of statewide, qualitative research efforts designed to gather information about women’s knowledge, attitudes and practices of health-promoting behaviors. The resulting research will be used, in conjunction with quantitative data, to better understand and effect changes that will likely improve the health of North Carolina babies.

### **NC FAMILY HEALTH RESOURCE LINE (1-800-FOR-BABY/1-800-367-2229)**

Since 1990, the Foundation has taken a leading role in promoting the NC Family Health Resource Line—a statewide toll-free, bilingual service for information and referral regarding prenatal care, pregnancy, parenting, child care and child health insurance. Each year, health communication specialists field more than 40,000 calls.

**LEAD:**  
*to guide or  
direct on a  
course*



**MORE THAN ONE-THIRD**

OF INFANT  
DEATHS  
ARE LINKED  
TO MATERNAL  
FACTORS

SOME FACTORS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE SUCCESS OF BIRTH OUTCOMES ARE LINKED TO MODIFIABLE LIFESTYLE CHOICES, WHILE OTHERS RELATE TO MORE COMPLEX SOCIAL ISSUES SUCH AS POVERTY AND ACCESS TO CARE.

As we continue to advance our mission, much of the Foundation's commitment will be directed in the following areas:

### IMPROVING WOMEN'S HEALTH

The overall health of the mother, beyond prenatal care, is one of the more significant factors related to successful birth outcomes. Emphasis on total health for women of childbearing age will be the basis for much of the Foundation's work, including the development of educational materials and public awareness initiatives.

In January 2006, we formally began a two-year campaign entitled *Next Step for Mom*, designed to improve the health of women in 20 North Carolina counties. Funded by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, the program provides training and technical assistance to existing regional and community-based programs that address improving the health of women who have recently given birth.

### ADDRESSING RACIAL DISPARITIES

The infant mortality rate among our state's African Americans is more than two and a half times that of whites, with numbers increasing each year. In the Fall of 2005, we initiated a partnership with the Old North State Medical Society (ONSMS) to engage their membership in this critical issue.

Coined *Every 9 Hours*, campaign messages will be disseminated through ONSMS member's offices and spouse's auxiliary, and featured in public awareness campaigns utilizing radio, television and print advertisements.

### INCREASING SIDS AWARENESS

Funding from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation and the CJ Foundation for SIDS has enabled the Foundation to implement a new bilingual program designed to train community outreach workers, current ITS-SIDS trainers and SIDS counselors to provide community education presentations across the state. Launched in late 2005, the program, entitled BESST (Baby's Easy Safe Sleep Training) is an essential next step in reducing one of the leading causes of infant death.



## PROFILE ON FUNDING

THE NORTH CAROLINA HEALTHY START FOUNDATION IS A PRIVATE, 501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION SUPPORTED ANNUALLY THROUGH:

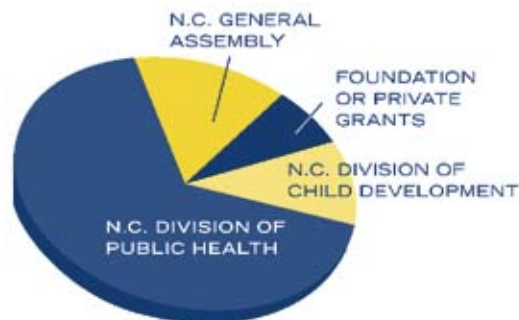
- Project-based contracts with the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services
- An annual appropriation from the N.C. General Assembly
- Private grants

Initially funded through a five-year, five million dollar contribution from Glaxo, Inc., the Foundation currently operates in a unique private/public partnership with the state of North Carolina to support local and statewide programs. This relationship affords access to leading experts, research findings and a statewide public health network, ensuring that the most appropriate and up-to-date information reaches North Carolinians.

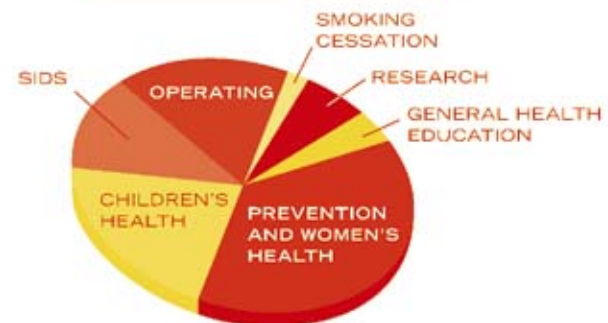
Since 1996, the Foundation has received funding through an annual appropriation from the N.C. General Assembly to support broader infant mortality reduction efforts implemented throughout the state.

Private support, including recent grants from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation and the CJ Foundation for SIDS, funds newly developed educational outreach programs designed to enhance existing SIDS risk reduction and women's health promotion efforts.

FY 05-06  
REVENUE SOURCES



FY 04-05  
EXPENDITURES BY TOPIC



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