

My Healthy Start Success Story

My name is Sharon and I come from a home filled with drugs and violence. When I found out I was pregnant, I knew that I needed to be a better mom for my child than what I had for a mother while growing up.

I'm thankful for the Healthy Start program and for my home visitor, Virginia, who helped me get my life back on track. You see, I dropped out of high school before learning that I was pregnant so in my first several visits with Virginia, I made it a goal of mine to go back and get my GED. I'm happy to say that I was able to study and pass all but one section of the GED test which I am currently working on passing now. I was also able to get my learner's permit which will eventually allow me the freedom to get a job and help provide for my family.

If it weren't for the Healthy Start program and my boyfriend's family who has given me a place to live, I don't know where me and my baby would be. I'm grateful for the education and support I've received through this program so that I can be the best mother

Impact

Since the implementation of the Healthy Start legislation in 1991, strides have been made in maternal and infant health in Florida. Infant mortality is a sentinel indicator of the general health in any community. It has decreased from 9.6 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 6.2 in 2015.¹ Florida currently leads Southern States in low infant mortality rates and is the only state with universal risk screening for pregnant women and infants.

Infant deaths in Florida have decreased 35.4% from 1990-2015. We can estimate that 753 more babies survived in 2015 as compared to 1990 due to the positive change in the infant death rate².

Screening pregnant women and newborns for risk in order to target resources where they are most needed has been a hallmark of the Healthy Start System.

In 2015-16 (*provisional*), of those screened, risks included³:

- 14.6% Tobacco & Alcohol Use
- 11.4% Ongoing medical issues
- 24.8% Late entry to prenatal medical care
- 33.1% First pregnancy
- 12.3% High BMI
- 13.5% Depression
- 3,739 Pregnant teens

Healthy Start's risk screening identification process, provision of risk-appropriate care, and facilitation of access to postpartum care have contributed to Florida's better birth outcomes; saved babies' lives; and reduced the costs associated with poor birth outcomes.

Healthy Start's Message to our Legislators:

1. **25 years of legislation has resulted in untold lives saved and over a million families helped by Healthy Start.**
2. **Thank You for your support in the 2016 session which enabled us to improve direct services for pregnant women and babies.**
3. **Please fully fund Healthy Start to include support for a potential budget appropriation shortfall for Healthy Start Medicaid services in the AHCA budget.**

Please don't balance the budget on the backs of Florida's babies . . . **In a budget exercise, DOH has proposed a \$19.9 million (approx. 80%) cut** to Healthy Start's DOH (non-Medicaid) funding that provides both services and the infrastructure for the system of care in each community for pregnant women and babies.

¹ FloridaCHARTS.com, Florida Department of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics. Note: Deaths occurring within 364 days of birth.

² Calculated 224,273 births in 2015 * .0096 = 2,153 estimated deaths less 1,400 actual deaths = 753 babies saved.

³ Florida CHARTS, Healthy Start Prenatal Screen ADHOC Report System accessed 12-12-16, <http://www.floridacharts.com/HS/Prenatal/HSPrenatalRpt.aspx>