

Care, Comfort and Hope

Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits

High Risk Sexual Behavior

The Wisconsin State Health Plan identifies the primary risks associated with unprotected sexual behaviors as unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. These health conditions significantly affect the health of the public as well as the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities. Hospitals reach out to at-risk mothers to help them have safe, healthy pregnancies and a successful transition to parenthood. Education classes supported by hospitals focus on maternal and child health issues and help connect women to the social, emotional, and health resources they need to ensure good outcomes for mother and baby.

Addressing the health care needs of a growing Hispanic population

From 1999 to 2004, Monroe County's Hispanic population grew more than 200 percent and Trempealeau County saw an increase of more than 350 percent. Prenatal care, labor and delivery, and postpartum care can offer challenges especially for those with language or cultural differences. Gundersen Lutheran New Life Family Center is providing linguistically and culturally sensitive childbirth education for Hispanic families whether patients of Gundersen Lutheran or not. This includes prenatal risk assessment that looks at concerns such as nutrition, medical history and social support. Midwives, nurses and Spanish-language interpreters also work with families to address labor, pain relief, breast feeding, SIDS prevention and other concerns.

Gundersen Lutheran Health System, La Crosse

On being a parent: a new program at Aurora BayCare Medical Center

Becoming a parent and being a parent are two entirely different experiences. Recognizing this, Aurora BayCare Medical Center offers a variety of parenting-related community education classes to support breastfeeding moms, nervous new fathers on the importance of being fully engaged in the lives of their new babies, and a class called 1,2,3 Magic.

1,2,3 Magic is based on an award-winning program originated by Dr. Thomas Phelan and designed to teach practical, easy-to-use discipline techniques without yelling, spanking or arguing.

Each of the two, 2-1/2 hour classes is dedicated to helping parents build strong, positive relationships with their children and to overcome the stress that can sometimes take the fun out of parenting. Annually, the classes are offered multiple times a year and more than 100 parents participate.

Aurora BayCare Medical Center, Green Bay

Baby Basics serves young families in West Allis and beyond

In spring 2008, Aurora West Allis Medical Center hosted a new program called "Baby Basics and Beyond" to help meet the challenges faced by new parents and grandparents. This community event for young families was centered on the topic of home and child safety.

Together with over 20 health-related community partners, Aurora caregivers were able to provide those in attendance with valuable information and easy access to health and safety resources. By leveraging the expertise of skilled caregivers such as Dr. George Idarraga, an Aurora pediatrician, and Dr. Elizabeth Deckers, an Aurora obstetrician & gynecologist, new young parents and grandparents were able to strengthen their knowledge of child safety and development. A session entitled "Dads In Training" introduced young new and expectant fathers to the joys and challenges of parenting their infants, supporting their baby's mother and their child.

Partners included Babies R Us, the West Allis Health Department, and the School-Age Parent Program – a partnership of West Allis/West Milwaukee Schools and the hospital that ensures pregnant teens finish school and acquire the skills they need to provide for their families and be responsible parents.

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Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits (continued)

This fall, the “Baby Basics and Beyond” program will be replicated at Aurora Sinai Medical Center to help meet the needs of new parents and grandparents elsewhere in the greater Milwaukee community.

Aurora West Allis Medical Center, West Allis

Providing women and children with access to vital services

The Western Racine County Health Department, part of Aurora Memorial Hospital of Burlington hosts the local Women, Infant and Children clinic at their location free of charge and offers other vital services when clients come to the clinic. The program serves low-income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women and infants and children up to five who are at nutrition risk.

According to Cheryl Mazmanian, director, Western Racine County Health Department, the clinic is open three days a month and demand continues to increase. In 2008, the health department served over 1,900 clients through the program and numbers through June 2009 are on pace to exceed last year’s total.

“This is a high risk group that is difficult to reach, they often lack telephones and transportation,” she said. “In addition to providing services through the Women, Infant and Children program, we also wrap other services around their visit, including immunizations.”

By offering immunization and other necessary services during the clinic, Mazmanian said families can pick up information on parenting skills, additional support programs, and ensure that their child’s immunization schedule is kept current.

Aurora Memorial Hospital of Burlington

Mile Bluff’s “Keeping Parenting Fun” program helps area parents

Mile Bluff Medical Center in Mauston recognized the opportunity to help area parents learn to answer some of the questions that come along with having young children and teenagers. Paul Gasser, marriage and family therapist, put together a “Keeping Parenting Fun” workshop to provide simple solutions for dealing with difficult issues that arise while rearing children.

The program was first offered at Mile Bluff’s Lake Delton location. After word got out about how helpful the sessions were, a number of Juneau County parents requested that the program be brought to Mauston as well. Participants appreciated all of the practical ideas they were given during the light-hearted meetings.

No one ever has all the right answers when it comes to raising a child, but Mile Bluff was able to help dozens of area parents gain the tools needed to feel more in control when dealing with the ever-changing challenges of being “Mommy” or “Daddy.” Thanks to this program, the community has learned how to keep parenting fun!

Mile Bluff Medical Center, Mauston

Midwifery & Wellness Center

The Aurora Midwifery and Wellness Center, the largest midwifery group in Wisconsin, provides access to high quality, holistic obstetrical/gynecological care to a medically underserved population of Milwaukee. Nearly 90 percent of patients, ages 15 to 44, live in zip codes with the highest infant mortality rates – neighborhoods noted for housing insecurity, unemployment and poverty. The center addresses teen pregnancy, prematurity, access to quality care, interpersonal violence, risk assessment and infant mortality.

The Center’s nurse-midwives engage in community-oriented primary care, reaching out to African-American and Latino populations. Outreach includes group prenatal visits at a local high school, Aurora Clarke Square Family Health Center and Milwaukee Health Services. They are community-based within Aurora’s integrated health care system while remaining actively engaged in teaching and community-based research projects in Milwaukee. The midwives work in collaboration with the physicians from the Aurora Women’s Health Center at Aurora Sinai Medical Center.

With deliveries at Milwaukee Health Services and other Aurora UW Medical Group clinics taken into account, the Midwifery and Wellness Center’s services and prenatal care result in more than 400 deliveries per year, with fewer low birth-weight babies for both adult and adolescent women.

“The Aurora Midwifery and Wellness Center has done much to contribute to improved perinatal outcomes in Milwaukee...Eighty percent of the women reside in neighborhoods noted for high rates of infant morbidity and mortality... Clearly, the clinical approach of the Midwifery and Wellness Center is making a difference in Milwaukee.” -- Ann E. Conway, MS, MPA, RN, Executive Director, Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care

“...The work done by your Center has a positive impact on one of the most serious health issues facing Milwaukee: poor birth outcomes, with infant mortality rates in the city among the highest in the nation... Marquette student nurse-midwives are educated alongside medical students and residents in a setting that encourages teamwork among the next generation of health care providers.” -- Leona VandeVusse, PhD, RN, CNM, FACNM, Associate Professor and Nurse-Midwifery Program Directors, Marquette University

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Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits (continued)

Safe Mom Safe Baby

Imagine a woman carrying a new life within her body. Then try to imagine she is living with the fear that harm could come to her and her unborn baby.

For the past four years at Aurora Sinai Medical Center, the Safe Mom Safe Baby program has helped women living in constant fear of abuse at the hands of their partners – the men who are the fathers of their babies. With the devoted assistance of a nurse case manager and an advocate from the Sojourner Family Peace Center, expectant moms have had somewhere to turn to receive the support they need.

Since the program started in 2005, nearly 400 pregnant women with abusive partners have received perinatal care, along with solace and support. Safe Mom Safe Baby has served nearly women living in every zip code in the metropolitan Milwaukee area, particularly those where unemployment rates have been high and are growing worse.

Many women who participate in Safe Mom Safe Baby find the strength to turn their lives around to protect themselves and their babies.

“To see each woman become stronger and empowered is our reward and what makes this program an honor to be affiliated with,” says Alice Kramer, RN, a founder of the program. “Very few medical organizations put forth the effort, support, and assistance to carry out this must-needed program as generously as Aurora Health Care. We are very grateful for all Aurora does.”

An outgrowth of Aurora’s Domestic Violence and Abuse Response Services, the long-term goal for Safe Mom Safe Baby, is to expand this dedicated core service to other sites.

Women, Infants and Children’s Program at Aurora Sinai Medical Center

The Newborn Certification Program of the Aurora Women, Infants and Children’s (WIC) program at Aurora Sinai Medical Center celebrated the fact that it certified more than 14,000 newborns for WIC benefits when it reached its 11-year anniversary in June 2008. By the end of the year, this unique program had certified 1,177 infants.

This unique program is the only hospital-based WIC site in the state and is a community partnership with the State of Wisconsin to serve residents who are pregnant, breastfeeding or postpartum, and children to age 5.

One of the most important benefits of the WIC program at Aurora Sinai Medical Center is bedside newborn certification, which ensures nutritious foods for low-income and at-risk women who deliver at the hospital. The mother receives a month’s worth of WIC vouchers for formula that can be redeemed at the hospital pharmacy, as an added convenience. The goal is to prevent nutrition-related health problems and promote breastfeeding.

An additional benefit of the program at Aurora Sinai is easy access to classes such as prenatal care, breastfeeding, asthma and special classes for teens and single parents, as well as access to programs to ensure personal safety.

Because breastfeeding has been linked to reductions in infant mortality as well as reduced incidence of SIDS, asthma, food allergies, diabetes and obesity in children, breastfeeding training and support is emphasized in this WIC program. Benefits to mothers include better healing after birth and a reduction in breast and ovarian cancers. However, a mother will receive a month’s worth of formula if she chooses not to breastfeed.

Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Milwaukee

Submit community benefit stories to Mary Kay Grasmick, editor, at mgrasmick@wha.org.



Read more about hospitals connecting with their communities at www.WiServePoint.org.