

Care, Comfort and Hope

Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits

Healthy Growth and Development

Early growth and development have a profound effect on health across the life span. Developmental disabilities can often be mitigated if they are detected early. Every week in Wisconsin almost 100 infants are born with low birth weight, and about six percent of those will die before their first birthday. Hospitals are striving to decrease infant mortality by providing pre-conception and inter-conception care to those affected by poor birth outcomes.

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

Teen pregnancy program

According to The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, three in ten girls in the United States get pregnant at least once by the age of 20, and six in ten teens that have had sex say they wish they had waited. Statistics like these make Affinity Health System's Teen Pregnancy Program at St. Elizabeth Hospital an important resource for pregnant teens in Northeast Wisconsin.

Jacki Karlin, R.N., LifeSpan educator, believes the program is a vital asset to pregnant teens in helping prepare for the road ahead.

"The program offers expectant teen mothers with not only invaluable information, but with support as well," Karlin said. "Pregnant teens face more challenges and pressures than pregnant adult women do. We provide a learning environment where they can be themselves and not worry about negative comments or judging looks."

The Teen Pregnancy Program covers a variety of topics that are important to pregnant teens, such as physical changes to your body during and after pregnancy, nutrition and exercise, delivery, newborn care, breastfeeding and parenting skills. All participants of the program also receive a tour of BirthPlace, Affinity's birthing department.

Any pregnant and parenting teens up to age 20 at delivery are eligible to participate, as well as their families or support people. Financial assistance is available to those who cannot afford the \$25 fee.

St. Elizabeth Hospital, Appleton

Infant mortality focus at health fair held in Kenosha

More than 100 parents and children attended the Kenosha Health Fair event held during summer of 2010, focused on infant mortality. The event was hosted by the Kenosha County Health Department and supported by Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha (AMCK), various community based organizations and the local high school.

The fair provided participants with education on prevention of infant mortality. Mary Kay Belcher, a nurse in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at AMCK, staffed one of the booths. She was able to raise enough money in the NICU department to purchase a new car seat for a raffle drawing at the fair to use as an incentive to encourage more visitors to her booth, at which Mary Kay and her co-workers addressed both co-sleeping and car seat safety.

"Most of the young women who visited our booth were unaware that car seats come with expiration dates. The young moms stopped by our booth because we had other fun stuff to give away," said Mary Kay. "We gave out free t-shirts and door hanger cards as an educational reminder to babysitters and parents regarding the danger of co-sleeping with their babies.

At the end of the fair, a lucky teen mom won the car seat that was raffled.

"I will never forget the big smile on the young woman's face. We definitely made her day. I am so glad to be in a position to make difference in someone's life. That makes my job even more rewarding," said Mary Kay.

Aurora Medical Center in Kenosha

(continued on next page)

Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits (continued)

Support for teen parents and prenatal teaching

Most teenagers don't plan to get pregnant, but many do. Teen pregnancies pose health risks to the mother and the baby, often because teens don't receive timely prenatal care. Their bodies are still growing and maturing and this can also increase the risk for pregnancy-related complications. And for teens who are unaware that social drinking, smoking and drug abuse, even only in tiny amounts, the risk and scope of complications is greatly increased.

That's what makes the class for pregnant teens at Lincoln High School in Manitowoc so important to Ashley Beeman, an obstetrical nurse at AMCMC who educates the students for one hour every week to impart critical prenatal health information to prepare the young women for what to expect during their pregnancy through labor and delivery. Ashley also advises the students on how to care for their babies while they complete their education and pursue meaningful and productive lives for themselves and their children.

As an obstetrical nurse, Ashley is a credible healthcare expert and students respond positively to her instruction. But what really enhances their learning curve and inspires the students to finish school is the fact that Ashley willingly shares her own story of having once been in the same position, pregnant as a senior in high school. Ashley admits that the challenges are really rough for some pregnant teens and the Teen Support Class at Lincoln High School helps get them on the right track.

Aurora Medical Center in Two Rivers

Safe sleep initiatives

Our safe sleep initiatives evolved and were energized after staff attended a meeting of WAPC (Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care). This group promotes safe sleep practices, breastfeeding and other initiatives. We have three initiatives in place at our hospitals to educate parents, supporting safe sleeping practices for newborns.

ProHealth Care had a long tradition of providing hand-made blankets to babies born at our facilities. But after we investigated the Halo Sleep Sack (a wearable blanket replaces loose blankets in the crib that can cover baby's face and interfere with breathing), we decided to alter this practice. The Safe Sleep Sacks are now given to everyone who delivers at ProHealth Care—a fleece version is provided to babies born on in the cooler months and a lighter-weight cotton blend one is provided during the summer months. Although the blankets were lovely, parents are much more appreciative of this safety-based gesture of warmth and congratulations!

By working collaboratively with Milwaukee Public Health, we are able to purchase Pack N Play portable bassinets with a quantity-rate discount. On admission our nurses ask the parents if they have a safe place for their baby to sleep. If they do not have a suitable crib, a social worker or care coordinator meets with the parents and provides a Pack N Play free of charge. We also review safe sleep principles and show them a safe sleep video.

Finally, the WAPC Safe Sleep group also designed the Safe Sleep Crib cards that we trialed at Waukesha Memorial Hospital for a few months. The cards reinforce the safe sleep teaching that we provide to all our new moms. After overwhelming support and positive feedback, WAPC printed and distributed these cards to every birth hospital in Wisconsin.

ProHealth Care, Waukesha

Helping new dads bond with their babies

Ask any new dad who has attended Daddy Talk, Bonding With Baby: it's good to talk to an experienced father – especially one who is a family doctor.

Daddy Talk is offered to new dads each year at the Aurora Hales Corners Clinic. David Stolp, MD, Family Practice, delivers an informative and interactive presentation on the importance of creating healthy family strategies for the benefit of everyone: moms, dads and their babies.

Dr. Stolp covers it all: The first days at home; basic milestones for dads; great ways to bond with baby; how to support Mom; medical concerns; strategies for creating a healthy balance between work and family, and infant toy safety.

Reflecting on the many times he has conducted this workshop he says, "I think the most interesting thing for me is that every time I lead this program there's always new and different information to cover. Many times I'll get insights from other dads about what they've discovered and I try to integrate that information into the next program.

"Also, it gives me a chance to give credit to my wife for all the amazing work she does. I tell the other dads about my mistakes in order to prevent them from making the same ones I did, while also letting them know that being a new parent is about learning as you go and that it's okay to make mistakes."

Aurora West Allis Medical Center



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