



Too Many Babies in Duval County Don't Celebrate Their First Birthdays

Driving Utilization of Community Programs and Services Focus of New "Hey, Mama" Campaign

Jacksonville, Fla. (June 14, 2022) – There is a significant disparity in birth outcomes – in fact, national and state-level data show that Black infants are 2-3 times as likely to die in infancy compared to White babies. And in some Duval County ZIP codes, the number of deaths is even higher.

Despite helping to achieve a 35 percent decrease in infant mortality in the greater Jacksonville area since the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition (NEFHSC) was established, there's still much work to be done so that more children, and their mamas, live long, healthy lives. That's why the NEFHSC, with funding provided by the Kids Hope Alliance, has engaged a local spoken word artist, Che Forreign, and others to help develop the new "Hey, Mama" social marketing campaign that seeks to deeply resonate with pregnant women and new mothers.

"Hey, Mama" aims to create an emotional education around the preventable causes of infant mortality while encouraging the utilization of a wide range of community programs and services. Through Connect, the NEFHSC's coordinated intake and referral service, women have access to free one-on-one consultation, home visits and other resources to address their specific needs and concerns.

"Infant mortality is an indicator of the health of a community. We lose the equivalent of eight kindergarten classes of children each year in Jacksonville, mostly to preventable causes," said Faye Johnson, CEO of the Coalition. "What many people don't realize is the importance of the total health of the mother before and during pregnancy. We hope our new 'Hey, Mama' effort, what I like to call our crusade, will help draw further attention to the underlying causes of these babies' deaths and inspire action to make sustainable changes."

"Hey, Mama" incorporates powerful images and emotive poetry with facts, research and information in a number of mediums including out-of-home, radio, digital, social media and a variety of grassroots efforts. "It's our intention to engage women where they're at – online, in their homes, at their doctors' offices, salons and places of worship – so they know there are experienced, caring people ready to help them navigate pregnancy and new motherhood while ensuring they're connected to the resources that are right for their health and well-being and that of their children," Johnson said.

About the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition

The NEFHSC leads the community effort to reduce infant death and improve the health of children, childbearing women, fathers and their families in Northeast Florida. For more information, view [our media kit](#).

For information about the "Hey, Mama" campaign, go to www.hey-mama.org or contact Erin Addington at eaddington@nefhsc.org or 904.447.9853.

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