



## Infant Mortality Awareness Month Helps Drive Understanding of Root Causes

**Jacksonville, Fla.** (Sept. 1, 2022) – In 2020, 128 babies in our five-county service area didn't live to see their 366<sup>th</sup> day. In other words, we lost the equivalent of eight classes of kindergartners in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns counties, a rate higher than state and national averages.

September is National Infant Mortality Awareness Month, a campaign sponsored by the National Healthy Start Association and supported by statewide and local organizations. Today and every day, the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition (NEFHSC) works to increase awareness of the high rate of infant mortality in our community, with a particular focus of addressing racial equity in birth outcomes.

"Although we're starting to see a modest decrease in our local infant mortality rate over the past two years thanks to concerted civic and community efforts, there's still a significant disparity in infant deaths, especially in certain ZIP Codes in Duval County," said Faye Johnson, CEO of NEFHSC.

Despite helping to achieve a 35 percent decrease in infant mortality in the greater Jacksonville area since the NEFHSC was established, there's still much work to be done so that more children live long, healthy lives. Last year, the city of Jacksonville issued a proclamation declaring the importance of lowering infant mortality and many efforts are underway to drive changes in public policy, workplace practices and health care access.

"Infant mortality is an indicator of the health of a community. We're still losing too many babies and their mamas from mostly preventable causes," continued Johnson. "Although there are no easy answers, no quick fixes, we do know that the total health of the mother before and during pregnancy, social determinants of health, lack of family planning, and siloed medical and social services have been identified as trends contributing to poor birth outcomes."

The NEFHSC promotes community-based programs that focus on improving the lives of pregnant women, new moms and their families. In addition to continuing our "[Hey, Mama](#)" social marketing campaign through the end of the month, the Coalition is hosting numerous activities throughout September including Day 366, a free community event with food and activities on Saturday, Sept. 10, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 5300 N. Pearl St., as well as our annual community baby shower, sponsored by State Rep. Tracie Davis, on Saturday, Sept. 24 from 9 a.m. to noon at 6024 Merrill Rd.

### 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](#) or contact Erin Addington at [eaddington@nefhsc.org](mailto:eaddington@nefhsc.org) or 904.447.9853. Visit the [Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions](#) for statewide information or the [National Healthy Start Association](#) for national data.

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