



## Driving Enrollment In Local Programs Focus of “Hey, Mama”

*Coalition renews campaign for third year to address high Black infant mortality rates in Duval County*

**Jacksonville, Fla.** (April 10, 2023) – The statewide rate of babies dying before they reach one year of age has declined between 2018-20 with nearly half of the counties’ rates below the state average of 5.8 percent. Although this downward trend is positive overall, there’s still much work to be done, especially in some areas of Duval County.

State-level and local data show there’s a significant disparity in birth outcomes with Black infants dying in infancy nearly three times higher compared to white babies. And in some Northeast Florida ZIP Codes, the number of deaths is more than double the state average.

That’s why the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition (NEFHSC) is relaunching its “Hey, Mama” social marketing campaign, an effort funded by the Kids Hope Alliance that seeks to encourage pregnant women and new mothers, as well as their spouses/partners and parents, to enroll in community programs and services designed to give their babies the healthiest start possible in life. Last year’s campaign doubled the number of people seeking more information about the NEFHSC.

“One baby’s death is one too many, but Duval County experiences more than 100 every year. It’s truly heartbreaking, especially since the majority of them are preventable,” said Faye Johnson, CEO of the NEFHSC. “The infant mortality rate is an indicator of the health of a community and the Coalition, in partnership with the City of Jacksonville and many others, are working to draw attention to the underlying causes of this complicated issue.”

“Hey, Mama” aims to create awareness around the preventable causes of infant mortality including social determinants of health and the importance of a woman’s health prior to becoming pregnant. It encourages women and their families in the 32208, 32209, 32210 and 32211 ZIP Codes to enroll in a wide range of free community programs and services including one-on-one consultations, home visits and other resources to address their specific needs and concerns.

Incorporating emotive poetry by local spoken word artist Che Forreign and powerful images with facts, research and resources, the “Hey, Mama” campaign supplements a variety of the NEFHSC’s grassroots efforts. “We want to connect with more women and their families so that we can become a key, local resource in their circle of support,” Johnson said. “Being pregnant or a new mom can be a joyful, wonderful time but it also can be stressful and sometimes, overwhelming. It’s our hope that women know there’s experienced, caring people ready to help them improve their health and well-being and that of their children.”

### **About the Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition**

The NEFHSC leads the community effort to reduce infant deaths 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](http://www.hey-mama.org) or contact Lisa Luther at [lisa@createaruckus.com](mailto:lisa@createaruckus.com) or 904.536.9957.