



Escambia County
Healthy Start
COALITION
Every baby deserves a healthy start

1804 W. Garden Street | Pensacola, FL 32502
(850) 696 - 2291 office | (850) 696 - 2551
www.healthystart.info

Contact: Theresa Chmiel, Executive Director

Phone: (850) 696-2291

Email: theresa@healthystart.info

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 29, 2016

COMMUNITY LEADERS TO HONOR BABIES WHO DIE BEFORE THEIR FIRST BIRTHDAY: Mayor and others to Proclaim September as Infant Mortality Awareness Month

Pensacola, FL – City of Pensacola Mayor Ashton Hayward will be joined by other local, state, and military officials to proclaim September as Infant Mortality Awareness Month on Thursday, September 8, 2016, at Bayview Park. The event will open with an invocation at 4 p.m. and include a tribute from Representative Clay Ingram, testimony from a local family, information about local infant mortality trends, a memory cake, refreshments, and an opportunity for citizens to pledge their support for the health of future infants.

“In 2015, 30 babies died before their first birthday. That’s the equivalent of an entire kindergarten class,” said Theresa Chmiel, Executive Director of the Escambia County Healthy Start Coalition, sponsors of the event.

Infant mortality rates are a globally accepted measure of a community’s well-being. And, while Escambia County, Florida has much to offer, beautiful beaches, a growing downtown business district, family friendly festivals, the County has one of the highest infant mortality rates in Florida: 7.7 compared to the state rate of 6.1. The leading causes of infant death in our County are preterm birth, low birth weight, sleep-related deaths, birth defects, and maternal complications of pregnancy. Many of these deaths are preventable.

Healthy Start has been linking women and families to the services in the community for 24 years and is highlighting Infant Mortality Awareness Month this September in order to continue to help babies grow and thrive.

“Our programs include parenting support and educational tools to strengthen family resilience, breastfeeding education and support, depression screening and linkage to behavioral health services and health insurance. Our goal is to create optimal infant and young child health and development,” said Chmiel. “We are honored to know our community is committed to bringing awareness to this tragic epidemic and invite our friends and neighbors to join us on September 8th to take the pledge to reduce infant mortality.”

###

About the Escambia County Healthy Start Coalition:

Healthy Start focuses on impacting the health of women, infants, children in the first three years of life, and their families by providing access to and education around health services and reproductive life planning. We support women before, during, and after pregnancy by addressing their health and social service needs, strengthening family resilience, and engaging community partners to enhance systems of care. For more information about the Healthy Start Coalition, visit healthystart.info or call (850) 696-2291