

from the *Heart*



Council Members

Judith J. Weber
Council Chair

Elmira R. Gainey
Vice-Chair

Cheri Sheffer
Treasurer

Hon. Sherwood Bauer, Jr.

Michael Busha

Anthony D. George, Jr.

Nancy Kline

Robert Ranieri

Doug Smith

Strategic Planning:

State of the Child Symposium

As the Children's Services Council of Martin County embarks in its strategic plan development (a data-driven process that takes place every five years and determines funding priorities based on outcomes we'd like to see in our community), we are pleased to announce plans for a State of the Child Symposium to be held on April 27 at our new office at 101 S.E. Central Parkway in Stuart.

This invitation-only symposium, which will involve representatives from our 19 funded agencies as well as other local dignitaries and community experts who have experience working with children, will be just one part of the process to identify ways to reach results we seek for children in Martin County. Many more opportunities will be available for future participation in this effort, and we encourage all who are interested to join our email list at www.cscmc.org for updates!

There is no greater keystone to the foundation of life than being born healthy. Infants who are born with a low birthweight (less than 5.5 lbs.) and/or prematurely (prior to 37 weeks gestation) have a much greater incidence of dying during their first year of life. If the infant does survive, he or she may suffer lifelong problems with health, learning and overall development. In Martin County, we have fewer babies born too small or too early than statewide, and the five-year trend is promising. In 2005, 8.7% of babies weighed less than 5.5 pounds. In 2010, it improved to 7%. Increased risk of low birthweight has many causes: pre-term birth, African-American heritage, the mother's age, having twins, if the mother had a previous birth with low birthweight, smoking during pregnancy and the mothers' history of stress or chronic diseases (hypertension, gestational diabetes, etc.). For all mothers, maintaining healthy lifestyles before pregnancy along with early and frequent prenatal care can help ensure a healthy birth.

The Need: Increasing birthweight



The Children's Services Council of Martin County is an independent district, approved by voters by referendum in 1988, to enhance the lives of the children of Martin County and to enable them to attain their full potential by supporting 34 impactful programs for youth in our community. Learn more about your agency at: www.cscmc.org and www.facebook.com/cscmc.

The Response: **Prenatal programs**



Martin County Healthy Start Coalition:

**Bellybutton Program
Community Health Education
Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies
Prenatal Care for the Uninsured**

Martin County Healthy Start Coalition reaches out to the community to teach expectant mothers the importance of early and frequent prenatal care as just one means of increasing birthweight and reducing prematurity.

They run the Prenatal Outreach Center in Port Salerno, where a coordinator funded by the Children's Services Council assists expecting mothers with finding a doctor and completing any necessary paperwork to access insurance coverage—and, importantly, makes sure the mother is able to stay under a doctor's care through the course of her pregnancy, including delivery and post-partum care.

Healthy Start also offers *Baby Basics* instruction during client home visits and through classes at the Health Department, at high schools and in Mary's Shelter to teach families what to expect when they're expecting. Healthy Start collaborates with doctors' offices and 38 agencies, as well as participates in many community outreach events, to assist women in receiving prenatal care as early as possible.

Through Healthy Start, the Children's Services Council funds programs that closes the gap in services to women and infants to help ensure healthy births for every family in Martin County.



Martin County Health Department:

School Health Program

While the School Health program focuses primarily on basics such as vision and hearing screenings, body mass index tests and general health needs during school, sometimes the school nurse is the first to identify a pregnancy. In 2010, 115 teens gave births in Martin County, according to the state Department of Health. These teen mothers are referred for services through Whole Child

2 Connection, which increases the likelihood of a healthy birth, helps the mother remains in school and assists with the parenting skills she'll need to be a successful parent.



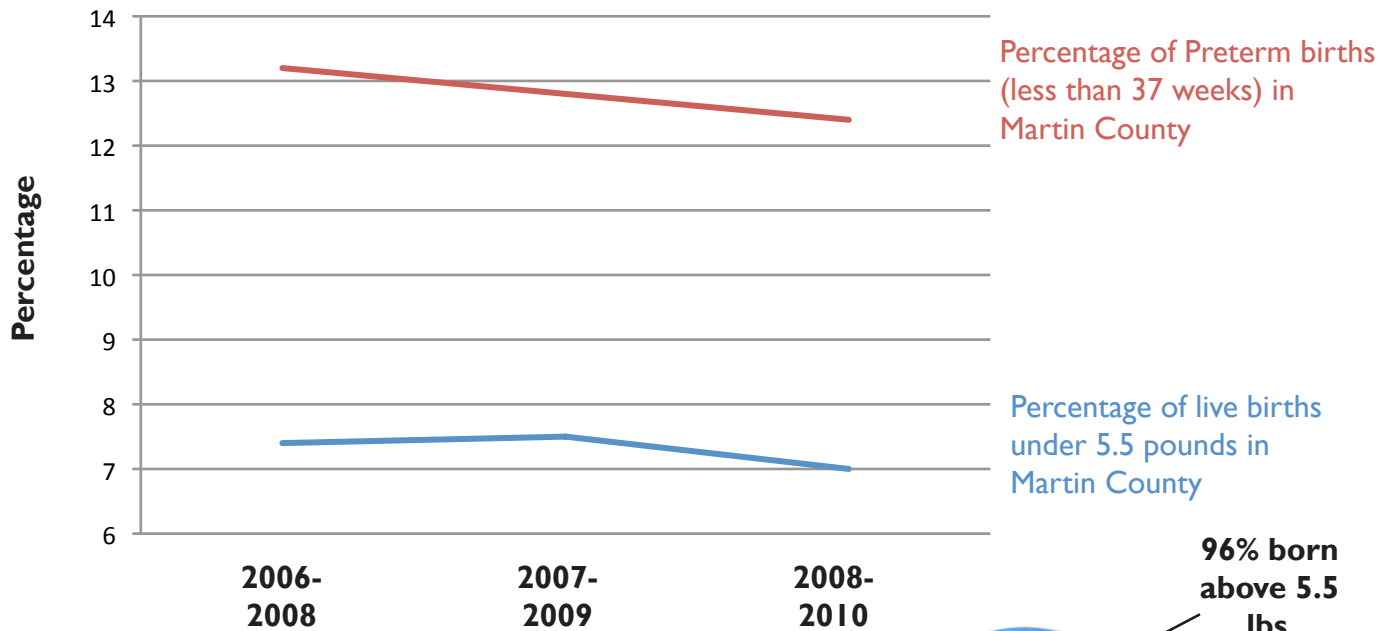
2-1-1 of the Treasure Coast: **2-1-1**



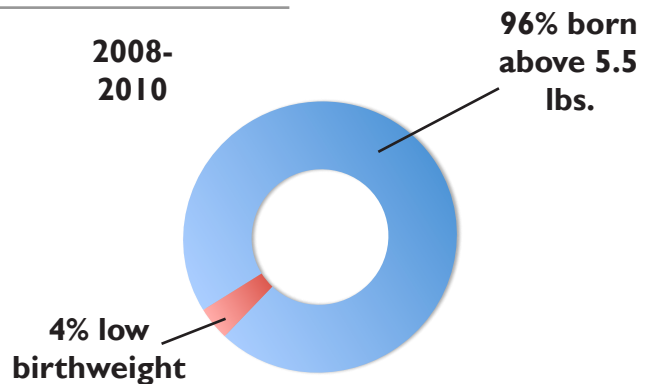
Whole Child Connection: **Whole Child Connection**

By logging on to www.connectingmartin.org or calling 2-1-1, Martin County residents can get connected to the services they need or just receive information that can help them lead safe, healthy and happy lives. From July 2010-June 2011, 89 residents gained information or were connected with prenatal care services through Whole Child Connection. Plus, an additional 93 Martin County residents were referred to prenatal care by calling 2-1-1. These agencies provide the information needed to help our babies be born healthy.

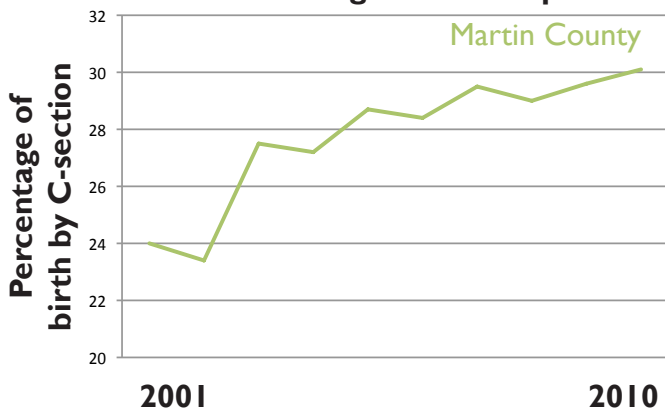
Positive trends for both the percentage of preterm births and low-weight births in Martin County



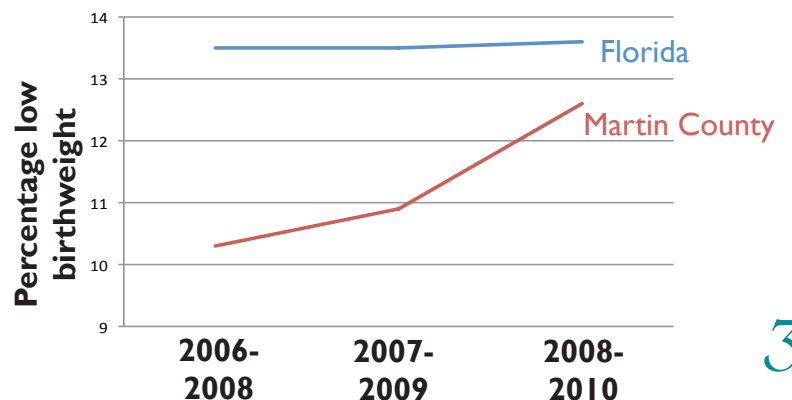
Martin County Healthy Start's Prenatal Care for the Uninsured program contributes to 96% of participants having babies who weigh more than 5.5 lbs.:



However, the rate of C-sections is increasing. Voluntary, late preterm C-sections (prior to 39 weeks) can result in incomplete brain development and future learning and health problems.



Low birthweight also remain an issue nationwide for black mothers, although Martin County babies weigh more on average compared to statewide.



Success: Healthy babies!

Success story

When Ciera* found out she was pregnant in November 2010, she knew that a lot of challenges were ahead of her. She had encountered many difficulties as a teen, including becoming homeless and a victim of abuse. Now 19 and married, she found herself pregnant and without a spouse because her husband was currently being held in Miami by immigration. Even though her initial screening did not potentially find her "at risk" for a poor birth outcome, the staff at Martin County Healthy Start Coalition's Prenatal Outreach Center recognized some potential risks that required additional monitoring. With ongoing case management and health education, Ciera was in close contact with the staff there.

Little Carlos* was born at 31 weeks, which was 9 weeks before his expected due date. Just 3 lbs., he was going to need extra medical attention at the NICU. The Prenatal Outreach Center staff continued to work with Ciera to make sure that she was successful in maintaining contact with the newborn. She was able to supply breast milk to the NICU, and they made sure that Ciera was able to work on her own recovery and health also. The staff also encouraged Ciera to attend an infant CPR class and counseling.

Today, Carlos* is a regular visitor at the Prenatal Outreach Center and is a healthy, happy baby. Healthy Start staff has continued education for Ciera through the Interconception Program, as well as provided needed baby supplies. Her story shows that even risky pregnancies can result in healthy babies, when the right resources are available.

* Names changed to protect privacy

Events & Meetings

March 24-25: Arts Fest in Memorial Park—look for the Kids Art Booth

March 25: Indiantown Motorcycle Rally—look for our booth!

March 26: Council meeting

March-April: Student Art Exhibits
(More information to come!)

April 27: State of the Child Symposium

May: SPLASH free swimming lesson vouchers will be available. (Stay tuned to learn more!)

Want to schedule a free Lunch and Learn?
Contact Suzanne Wentley at
swentley@cscmc.org!

Council News

We are moving! When we were approved by referendum in 1988, the Council smartly began saving portions of the interest from our accounts to save enough for a new office building, which will save taxpayer money! This office, which we will continue to share with Martin County Healthy Start, Whole Child Connection and the Father & Child Resource Center, was built to green standards. That means it's energy-efficient in many ways, saving in utility costs. Add in the additional long-term savings from what the Council had spent in rent, and it's a great investment for Martin County's future. We have community meeting space as well. Interested in having your group meet at our office for free? Contact Rebecca Galante at rgalante@cscmc.org.

Contact Us

Children's Services Council of Martin County
101 S.E. Central Parkway
Stuart, FL 34994
(772) 288-5758 • www.cscmc.org