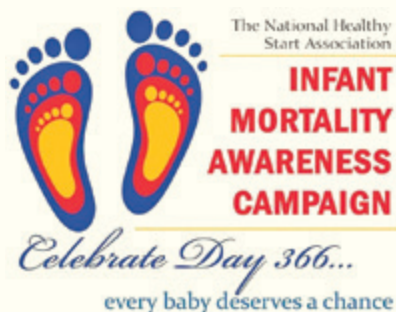


SEPTEMBER IS...

National Infant Mortality Awareness Month



Although infant mortality rates have gone down over the years, they are still higher than many other developed countries.

On September 1, 2022, the National Healthy Start Association officially declared September as National Infant Mortality Awareness Month.

The infant mortality awareness campaign, Celebrate Day 366, Every Baby Deserves a Chance, supports and inspires people from around the nation to take action to improve the health and well-being of women, infants, children and families.

Every baby deserves the right to:

- Take their first step
- To say their first word
- To graduate from high school
- To graduate from higher institution of learning
- To Celebrate Day 366

Source: National Healthy Start Association

PROJECT NAF COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

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Business Owner, C&J Designs

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ECHO (Enhancing Collaborative Health Options & Opportunities)

Project NAF
(Nurturing Asheville and Area Families)

Providing services to African American pregnant and postpartum women, Project NAF is both led and created by an African American-led nonprofit faith-based organization.

Mount Zion Community Development, Inc. remains grateful for its founding by the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Asheville under the visionary leadership of its Pastor, Rev. Dr. John H. Grant. We are also grateful to the Church for its ongoing commitment, dedication, and sustainability as an anchor institution in supporting the ongoing sustainability of MZCD.

For over 24 years, Project NAF has provided services to support Black/African American mothers, infants, and their families to access prenatal, perinatal, and early childhood education resources in Buncombe County and beyond. Its goal is to promote healthy births, reverse infant mortality rates, and increase positive health outcomes. Notably, Mount Zion



Community Development, Inc. (MZCD) has a 24-year history of supporting maternal and child health in historically excluded communities.

Project NAF utilizes a research-based approach, supported by evidence-based strate-

gies, proven effective to support mothers and their babies over a period of 2 ½ years+. Additionally, MZCD's Project NAF has been successful in improving the health of women with pregnancy risks. Project NAF has been recognized at an event hosted by MAHEC (Asheville) and sponsored by the Buncombe County Medical Society, as a National Infant Mortality Reduction Model by the US Bureau of Primary Health Care. The NCDHHS Women's Health Division recommended the Project NAF Program as a community program model to the NC Child Fatality Task Force, and as a state model to the Appalachian Regional Commission in Washington, DC.

Preventing Maternal Mortality

The health and well-being of Buncombe County mothers and mothers-to-be and their babies determines the health of the next generation of North Carolina residents. Unfortunately, in addition to infant mortality, 700 women still die each year in the United States from complications due to pregnancy.

There are also considerable racial disparities. American Indian, Alaska Native, and Black women are two to three times more likely to die of pregnancy-related causes than white women. Although this is rare, it happens, and is not acceptable.

According to the CDC, almost two thirds of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable. Recognizing the urgent warning signs, getting an accurate and timely diagnosis, and quality care can save lives.

Healthcare professionals play a critical role in eliminating preventable maternal mortality. One part of the solution is to really hear women's concerns during and after pregnancy and engage in an open conversation to make sure any issues are adequately addressed.

- Help patients understand the urgent maternal warning signs and the need to seek medical attention right away.
- When patients are engaged in their healthcare, it can lead to improvements in safety and quality.
- Take steps to make them feel understood and valued during their visit with you.

MESSAGE FROM SAPPHIRE DE'BELLOTT

What is Infant Mortality and Why is It Important?

Infant mortality is when a baby dies before its first birthday. In 2020, the infant mortality rate (IMR) in the US was 5.681 per 1,000 live births. The health and well-being of children and families across the globe are measured by infant mortality rates.

The infant mortality rate is an important measure of the well-being of infants, children and pregnant women because it is associated with a variety of factors, such as:

- Maternal health
- Quality and access to health services and medical technology
- Poverty and socioeconomic conditions



Sapphire De'Bellott

- Community health
- Public health practices

Infant mortality in the United States is predominantly caused by congenital disabilities, pre-term birth and low birth weight, maternal pregnancy complications, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and injuries (such as accidental suffocation).

The 2022 worldwide infant mortality rate is 26.693 deaths per 1000 live births, a 2.35% decline from 2021.

MOUNT ZION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, INC.



Dr. John H. Grant, Founding Chairman, President, CEO of Mount Zion Community Development, Inc.



Belinda K. Grant, Chief Executive Director of Mount Zion Community Development, Inc.

PROJECT EMPOWER
EDUCATION MEANS POWER

Community Advisory Council

Johnnie Grant: *The Urban News*

Dr. Randall Johnson:
Asheville City Schools District

Rasheeda McDaniel: Buncombe County Health & Human Service

MOUNT ZION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, INC.

Staff

Belinda K. Grant: Executive Director, (828) 776-1428

Sapphire De'Bellott: Project NAF Outreach Worker (828) 776-1429

Ms. Rosa B. Hearst: Receptionist

Natalia Munoz-Schneider

Board of Directors

Linda Glaze: Chair, Chief Operating Officer

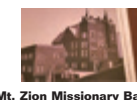
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