ANNUAL REPORT
FY19
IMPROVING MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH IN GEORGIA
JULY 2018-JUNE 2019
Since 1974, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia (HMHBGA) has been the strongest statewide voice for improved access to healthcare and health outcomes for Georgia's mothers and babies. HMHBGA is the only organization in Georgia that focuses on the full spectrum of maternal and child health concerns from prematurity to maternal mortality.

**Access to Vital Resources:** On behalf of the Georgia Department of Public Health, HMHBGA operates the Georgia Family Healthline, Children 1st high-risk infant screening line, and Help Me Grow Georgia to provide callers with appropriate referrals and resources across the State. HMHBGA also operates the Prevent Child Abuse Georgia Helpline on behalf of Georgia State University.

**Advocacy:** In a non-partisan role, HMHBGA engages with legislators as well as medical, business and other community organizations to encourage fiscally responsible policies that promote access to care and improved health outcomes for women and children.

**Education:** HMHBGA provides evidence-informed prenatal education across the State through collaboration with other community organizations and clinicians. HMHBGA also works to educate and build capacity for healthcare providers and public health professionals working in maternal and infant health across Georgia.

Learn more at [www.hmhbga.org](http://www.hmhbga.org).
This report includes outcomes from our statewide efforts to improve maternal and infant health outcomes in Georgia during Fiscal Year 2019 (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019).

We are proud to share our many accomplishments with you, our supporters. Without the work of advocates, policymakers, State agencies, partner organizations, funders, providers, and of course, the families we serve - our work would not be possible.

For 45 years HMHBGA has continued to be the strongest voice for mothers and babies in the State of Georgia.

Please join us in reviewing this year's report, share it with others, and continue to help us move the needle for Georgia’s families.

Sincerely,
Pam Wilkes
President, Board of Directors
2017-2019

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In partnership with the United Way of Greater Atlanta, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition established the Building Perinatal Support Professionals (BPSP) project in 2018. The primary goal of this project is to increase the number of qualified perinatal support professionals serving communities most at risk for poor birth outcomes.

Selected applicants for the first BPSP cohort represented DeKalb, Fulton, Gwinnett, Cherokee, and Paulding counties. Other key components for selection were a passion for maternal and infant health, and a desire to work in underserved communities.

HMHBGA received 41 applications; the first BPSP cohort consisted of a narrowed down list of 20 women – 7 on the childbirth educator track and 13 on the doula track.

HMHBGA connected each participant with a mentor with an established career in either childbirth education or doula services, and arranged 6 additional educational opportunities on topics ranging from social media branding to belly binding. HMHBGA was also able to cover DONA and ICEA membership and certification fees, thanks to the generous grant from United Way of Greater Atlanta. United Way's grant funded the additional trainings, as well as provided reading materials. Additionally, cohort members were connected to birthing individuals interested in doula services or childbirth education.

The birth doula track participants served 64 women between July 2018 and June 2019. The following are outcomes from those births attended by HMHBGA trained doulas:

- 100% took place in a hospital setting.
- 91% of the births were vaginal deliveries including one vaginal birth after a previous C-section.
- The average gestational age was 39 weeks and there were no preterm births.
- The average birth weight was 6lbs, 15 oz.
- The average APGAR score at 1 minute was 7.5 and the 5 minute average score was 9.
- 100% of the women served breastfed post delivery.
- All women initiated skin-to-skin contact post delivery.
- No maternal or infant deaths.

The childbirth education track cohort members served 134 women in the same period.

The 1st cohort graduated on June 30, 2019. Beginning in 2020, the 2nd round of BPSP will provide 12 individuals with scholarships to become trained as doulas.
The HMHBGA Call Center provides support, referrals and access to vital resources to thousands of Georgia’s families each year by managing four lines of business:

**1-800-Children, the Prevent Child Abuse Georgia Helpline:** The PCA Helpline is an information & referral (I&R) line for people who are concerned about the healthy development of children and the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

**1-800-300-9003, the Georgia Family Healthline:** Georgia’s leading source for referrals to providers, community resources, and public programs.

**1-855-707-8277, the Children 1st Information and Referral Line:** HMHBGA’S I&R specialists conduct thousands of screenings each year to assess eligibility for the DPH Children 1st Program and other Public Health services.

**1-888-457-4769, Help Me Grow Line:** Help Me Grow (HMG) is a centralized access line for all public health programs that began in February 2019. HMG connects families and children to early intervention resources and services.

- **2,444** Total GA Family Healthline calls
- **1,542** Total Help Me Grow calls
- **1,277** Total Prevent Child Abuse calls
- **49,155** Total Children 1st calls
- **16 seconds** Average call wait time
- **97%** Caller Satisfaction Rate
Inspiring Mothers of Georgia Awards Luncheon

HMHBGA hosted the 3rd Annual Inspiring Mothers of Georgia Awards Luncheon on April 28, 2019 at the Loudermilk Conference Center.

After receiving nominations from across the State from many communities, six honorees were selected for their embodiment of the essential characteristics for the award: strength, kindness, caring, sacrifice and generosity.

- Aisha Shah: Albany, GA
- Kristian Postma: Dawsonville, GA
- Damaris Henderson: Atlanta, GA
- Michelle Cope: Moultrie, GA
- Marcia McGinnis: Dunwoody, GA
- Jasmine Womack: Atlanta, GA

Each of the honorees was presented their award, along with gifts and prizes from their communities at the ceremony.

Monica Kaufman Pearson, the first woman and first minority to anchor the daily evening news in Atlanta, served as the Luncheon's Honorable Emcee.

The Luncheon also featured two Keynote Speakers: Kate Rope and Pamela Winn. Kate Rope is an award-winning journalist and author of *Strong as a Mother: How to Be Happy, Healthy and (Most Importantly Sane From Pregnancy to Parenthood*}, a guide to transitioning into motherhood in healthy and sane way. Pamela Winn is the founder of RestoreHER, a reentry advocacy organization, dedicated to enhancing the lives of women by ending mass incarceration for women of color and pregnant women.
Each year at our Annual Meeting & Conference, HMHBGA brings together members, providers and advocates to hear from maternal and infant health experts on a number of important issues to improve outcomes for our Georgia families.

We provide the most recent research available, interactive workshops and professional education credits for social workers, nurses, case managers IBCLCs and CLCs.

In 2018, we were proud to cohost the event with the Center for Black Women’s Wellness, in Atlanta, from October 22-23.

The focus of the conference was on the integration of health equity into maternal and infant health clinical practice and programs for Georgia.

HMHBGA Webinars

HMHBGA hosted 10 free webinars in FY19 for MCH professionals on topics ranging from hypertensive disorders in pregnancy to essential oils for breastfeeding and pediatric patients.

- Community Health Needs Assessment: Ensuring Georgia’s Hospitals Prioritize Maternal & Infant Health
- Hypertensive Disorders in Pregnancy
- A Guide to Public Cord Banking for MCH Professionals
- How to Increase Engagement via Phone-Based Services
- Maternal & Childhood Immunization
- Essential Oils for Pediatric Patients and Breastfeeding Mothers
- 2019 Legislative Session Overview for Maternal and Child Professionals
- Community-Engaged Approaches to Address the Ethical Concerns of Maternal Mental Health Disparities
- Research Evaluation of Cervical Length for Prediction of Spontaneous Preterm Birth

We provided continuing education credits through the Georgia Nurses Association for seven of the 10 webinars.

Our webinars had an average of 52 attendees. 95.6% of surveyed participants agreed or strongly agreed that the webinar met their personal objectives, and 84% planned to make changes to their practice based on knowledge gained from the webinar.

For FY 2020, we will continue to collaborate with the Georgia Perinatal Association (GPA) and others to produce webinars. Next year’s topics will include community-based breastfeeding training, and hypoglycemic policy for newborns, among others.

2018 Annual Meeting & Conference
Advocacy in Action

2019 Legislative Session Achievements

HMHBGA is a dedicated non-partisan network of grassroots advocates, healthcare professionals and concerned citizens. We work with key stakeholders across Georgia to promote sound policy that will address issues around maternal and infant health. During the 2019 legislative session, HMHBGA and our partners we successfully advocated for the following:

- **HB 345**: ensures that no restraints of any kind are used on a woman who is in the second or third trimester of pregnancy, in labor, in delivery, or in the immediate postpartum period while incarcerated. Also ensures that no pregnant women would be subject to a squat and cough search or vaginal exam unless prescribed and performed by a licensed healthcare professional.
- **HR 707**: recognizes May 1, 2019 as Maternal Mental Health Day at the state capitol.
- **$200,000** for additional nurse abstractors for the Maternal Mortality Review Committee
- **$600,000** for HMHBGA to establish three perinatal support satellites in Wilcox, Randolph, and Meriwether Counties
- **$1.05 million** to screen, refer, and treat maternal depression and related behavioral disorders in rural and underserved areas
- **$13,000** to convert space in either the Capitol Building or Coverdell Legislative Building to a lactation room

HMHBGA'S Working Groups

HMHBGA convenes a number of working groups to address priority maternal and infant health topics. These topics were selected for their importance as well as the fact that no other multi-disciplinary, multisector groups are working on these issues. We do not duplicate - we amplify!

**Oral Health and Pregnancy**: The Oral Health and Pregnancy Working Group's goal is to increase access to adequate oral healthcare for pregnant women covered by Medicaid in Georgia. Focus areas include: patient education, perinatal provider education, and Medicaid administrative barriers.

**Doula Access**: The Doula Access Working Group's goal is to ensure that all women in Georgia will have affordable access to culturally appropriate doula care if they so choose. Focus areas include: insurance reimbursement implementation, hospital doula care buy-in, and Georgia doula research.

**Business Brain Trust**: The Business Brain Trust is a convening of working professionals who are experts in their respective fields. The goal of the group is to engage the business community for one-off sessions regarding HMHBGA business projects related to marketing, engagement, and social enterprise.
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia moved our Call Center to a new suite in the same building in 2019!

Originally, HMHBGA’s Call Center was located in Suite 410, alongside the HMHBGA Administrative Offices. However, due to our organization’s growth, the Call Center had to be moved to create more space to house all of the staff and interns.

The Call Center was moved to Suite 414, decorated and furnished to support our incredible team of Information & Referral Specialists as they operate our four lines of business.

We are excited to have this space and equipment to provide excellent customer service to thousands of Georgia families every week of the year.
HMHBGA hosted its first Annual Supporter Appreciation event in November, 2018. The event was held at TopGolf Midtown where volunteers, members, and Board members received free food, drinks, and play to thank them for their service to our organization.

We would like to thank our sponsor, Northside Hospital, for making this event possible!

HMHBGA has plans to continue the Supporter Appreciation Night tradition in 2019, where the event will be held at American Spirit Whiskey.
On June 27-28, 2019, the teams from Grady EMS in Baldwin County and the Milledgeville City firefighters participated in an evidence-based training program to reduce sleep-related infant deaths in Baldwin County. The training was organized by the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) and Grady EMS in collaboration with HMHBGA.

The program, entitled, ‘Direct On-Site Education’, or ‘DOSE’, is an innovative program developed in 2011 in response to the number of sleep-related infant suffocation deaths occurring in Broward County, Florida. As these deaths are considered preventable, the creators looked for a way to utilize first responders in the fight to reduce infant mortality. DOSE utilizes first responders to disseminate the Safe Infant Sleep message to the communities that they serve. DOSE trains fire fighters, paramedics, EMS personnel, police, child protective investigator officers and housing authority workers to name a few. Those trained are able to do a safe sleep check and education session with families while completing routine calls.

In Georgia, three infants a week will die from sleep-related causes, the majority of which are preventable. Sleep-related causes of death include Sudden Unexpected Infant Death, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and Accidental Suffocation Strangulation in Bed. SIDS and other sleep-related causes are a major contributor to Georgia’s high infant mortality rate. While the rate of SIDS has marginally increased over the last five years, the rate of suffocation has nearly doubled. Education about safe sleep for caregivers and healthcare professionals has the potential to reduce Georgia’s high infant mortality rate.

At the training sessions in Baldwin County, Captain James Carroll conducted the training for 17 firefighters, 8 paramedics and 3 paramedic supervisors who will implement the pilot.

The DOSE Program is defined as a Cutting Edge Practice by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP).
Over the past 3 years, HMHBGA has actively worked to increase access to prenatal education and capacity across the State. After a pilot study in the Augusta Perinatal Region in 2018, we found that only 10-18% of women were accessing prenatal education. This pilot study led to a full report published in 2019 on the content and offering of prenatal education across the entire State. The report was entitled, *An Evaluation of Current Prenatal Education Availability and Receptivity to Online Education in the State of Georgia*.

The report assessed the content, quality, and accessibility of prenatal education, along with the receptivity of providers and patients to an online prenatal education platform. Over 300 surveys were sent out to obstetric practices across Georgia to determine what, if any, prenatal education they provided to their clients. A further 105 prenatal education courses were reviewed for content and topics. Finally, focus groups with pregnant and postpartum were held in both rural and urban areas of the State. The report highlights the following:

- Overwhelmingly, important topics like Oral Health during pregnancy, HIV/STI transmission, health insurance information, information on the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program (SSNP) for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Planning for Healthy Babies Program (P4HB) were largely missing from prenatal education curriculum.
- 82%-90% of pregnant women do not access prenatal education in our State.
- 68% of providers surveyed said they would refer to an online prenatal education model.
- Focus group participant themes centered around additional postpartum information, including care after a cesarean, and overall postpartum support.

The content on HMHBGA’s upcoming project, Pickles & Ice Cream Georgia, reflects the responses of the surveyed prenatal educators, with a focus on the underrepresented topics. Pickles & Ice Cream will be a mom-focused, evidence-informed, blog-based prenatal education website. Additionally, HMHBGA has created toolkits to assist prenatal educators with building these underrepresented topics into their curricula. The toolkits will also be available for download on Pickles & Ice Cream.

Prenatal education has been cited as a successful intervention for improving both birth experience satisfaction and birth outcomes. In Georgia, both prenatal care and prenatal education vary by region.

Download the report at hmhbga.org/resources. If you have any questions, email Mica Whitfield at mica.whitfield@hmhbga.org.
Between July 2018 and June 2019, HMHBGA served 127 in our Prenatal Education Workshops. 44% were Hispanic or Latina, 34% were Black, 6% were white, 2% were Asian, and 14% did not disclose their ethnicity.

Georgia Prenatal, the Washington County Health Department, and Robert Stinson Associates were repeat partners during the FY18. We also gave classes at the Oakhill Family Center, CIMA International Women's Health Services, the Latin American Association, the Redan-Trotti Library, and others.

The women 127 women served represented 12 counties across Georgia, and even one in South Carolina! Most of the women came from Gwinnett County, Washington County, Fulton, and Dekalb, respectively. For FY 2020, we hope to reach even more counties and engage with established and new partners.

39% of participants were uninsured. Of the 61 women who were insured, the majority had Medicaid or one of the Care Management Organizations (e.g. Amerigroup, CareSource, Peach State & Wellcare).

The prenatal education curriculum covers a range of priority topics, including breastfeeding, safe sleep, perinatal HIV transmission, AWHONN’s post-birth warning signs, and birth spacing. Participants showed the greatest increase in knowledge in the following topics: perinatal HIV transmission, breastfeeding, postpartum check-ups, safe sleep, and post-birth warning signs.

During our follow up surveys, participants expressed satisfaction with the class content.

- "Really informative, comfortable atmosphere, explained information in a way that it could be understood, second child and learned so much information, instructor was really good and personable."
- "Muy informativa y gracias x hacerlo en espanol."
- "I would recommend the class."
- "The location was convenient & class was engaging."
- "It was a great workshop with good food and good people."
- "Enjoyed the brochures and the citations in the presentation."
QUESTIONS?

DON’T BE SHY! E-MAIL US AT THECOALITION@HMHMBGA.ORG.
Improving maternal and infant health in Georgia through advocacy, education and access to vital resources since 1974.

Learn more at: www.hmhbga.org

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