



Think**39**WEEKS!
Healthy Babies Are Worth The Wait

Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions

www.39weeksfl.org

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march  of dimes®



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Why 39 Weeks is Right on Time

In Florida, we believe every baby deserves a healthy start. However, one in eight babies born in the United States is born too soon, and babies born just a few weeks early – between 37 and 38 weeks gestation – make up a growing proportion. Babies born early – even just a few weeks early – are more likely to have negative birth outcomes, including developmental delays, poor organ function and even death. Ensuring that babies have the chance to fully develop in the womb is the first step to a healthy start. At least 39 weeks of pregnancy gives a baby all the time it needs to grow before birth.

1. Healthy babies are worth the wait.
2. Premature birth is the number one killer of newborns.
3. A cesarean section is a major surgery for mom, requiring longer recovery than a vaginal birth and an increased chance of complications such as infection or bleeding.
4. Medications used to induce labor do not always work, increasing the chance that a mother will need a c-section.
5. A baby's brain at 35 weeks weighs two-thirds of what it will weigh at 39-40 weeks.
6. Premature babies can encounter respiratory distress due to underdeveloped lungs.
7. Due dates are not an exact calculation and can be off by as much as two weeks.
8. Brain bleeds, causing pressure in the brain and even brain damage, can occur in babies born prior to 32 weeks.
9. Babies born early are more likely to have vision and hearing problems at birth and later in life than those born full term.
10. Heart problems are common in premature babies.
11. Pregnancy provides ample time for parents to learn more about the benefits of breastfeeding and infant care.
12. Enjoy a shorter hospital stay and faster recovery with vaginal birth.
13. Full-term babies have greater ease in suckling and swallowing for breastfeeding.
14. Key organs like the liver, brain and lungs need maximum time for growth.
15. Babies born at healthier weights have an easier time staying warm.
16. Babies born at healthier weights can stay awake longer to eat.
17. C-sections can cause complications in future pregnancies.
18. A mother's uterus is designed to contract to help push the baby through the birth canal. Let nature take its course.
19. Babies born by C-section have more medical problems than babies born by vaginal birth.
20. Babies born too early are often too small.
21. Healthy habits throughout a pregnancy contribute to healthier babies.
22. Prenatal care does not end early, so why should your pregnancy?
23. Jaundice, low blood sugar and infection risks are posed when babies are born too early.
24. Educating yourself and others about the health benefits of a full-term pregnancy can produce support.
25. Researchers report that infants born by C-section are twice as likely to be obese compared to those born vaginally.
26. Make the health of your baby a priority over comfort and convenience.
27. Parenting is a lifelong job so don't rush it.
28. The safest birth plan for mom and baby is to wait for labor to begin on its own.
29. Recent studies suggest that extra time in the womb may contribute to better academic scores in life.
30. Many complications associated with preterm births may be avoided with healthy, full-term pregnancies.
31. Premature babies are often too small to go home with mothers immediately after birth, remaining for weeks and even months for special care.
32. Physicians are well-trained in the complications that result in pre-term births. Trust them to advise you of the optimal delivery plan for your baby.
33. While there are great advancements in the care of premature babies, there are no medical guarantees in care and treatments.
34. Some premature babies suffer long-term disabilities such as cerebral palsy.
35. Half of all neurological disabilities in children are related to premature birth.
36. All premature babies are at risk for health problems.
37. Premature babies may be at increased risk of symptoms associated with autism, according to two recent studies.
38. Studies suggest that babies born very prematurely may be at increased risk of adult health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.
39. Every baby deserves a healthy start!

WORKING WITH LOCAL PARTNERS & EXPERTS

For nearly 75 years, the March of Dimes has been leading research, legislation and initiatives that are producing stronger and healthier babies throughout the nation. Each year, more than 500,000 babies are born prematurely, an increase of 36 percent over the past 25 years. Throughout the world, 1.3 million babies are born prematurely each year.

Campaign Partners

March of Dimes – www.marchofdimes.com

Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions –
www.healthystartflorida.com

Florida Perinatal Quality Collaborative –
<http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/chiles/fpqc/index.htm>

**Florida Hospital Association's
Hospital Engagement Network** -
<http://www.fha.org/health/hen.php>

To address this crisis, the March of Dimes launched the Think 39 Weeks! Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait public education campaign. Launched in 2011, **Think 39 Weeks!** was created to dispel myths about elective deliveries and increase awareness about the critical importance of waiting at least 39 full weeks for healthiest babies.

With support from the March of Dimes, the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions are leading the implementation of the **Think 39 Weeks!** campaign targeting consumers. California, Illinois, New York and Texas join Florida in accounting for nearly 40 percent of all U.S. births.

In addition, the March of Dimes has included the Florida Perinatal Quality Collaborative at the Lawton & Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies in the **Think 39 Weeks!** campaign. The Perinatal group serves more than 60 Florida hospitals and health care providers by educating them about the attitudes, practices, procedures and policies that lead to elective deliveries.

These partnerships provide a unique collaborative that provides even greater opportunity for women and infants to receive safer and higher quality health-related services.

The Florida Hospital Association recently added the reduction of early elective deliveries to the quality and patient safety initiatives addressed through its Hospital Engagement Network (HEN). The goal of the FHA-HEN is to reduce elective deliveries to 3 percent by the end of 2013.



Baseline Survey Results

Consumer Opinions on Pregnancy and Delivery Methods

Florida Consumers Wrongly Believe Early Baby Delivery is Safe

Despite wide-spread recognition that a baby reaches full-term at 39-40 weeks of gestation, nearly half of Florida consumers responding to a statewide survey indicated delivery before this time is safe (See Figure 1). Nearly half of the survey respondents who had a baby in the last 18 months reported being offered the option of scheduling an induction or C-section by their health care provider.

The survey was conducted by the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions (FAHSC), Inc. as part of a three-year effort to raise consumer awareness about the importance of the last weeks of pregnancy. Funded by the March of Dimes Florida Chapter, the “Think 39 Weeks: Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait” education initiative is aimed at reducing the number of early elective inductions and C-sections in the state.

More than 85 percent of the survey respondents stated that a baby is full-term at 37 weeks or more, with 60 percent indicating 39 weeks or later (See Figure 2). However, 45 percent stated it was safe to deliver earlier than 37 weeks. Nineteen percent of pregnant respondents said their doctors had presented the option of a scheduled delivery, as did 49 percent of women who recently delivered. Nearly 40 percent of survey respondents agreed with the statement, “In the last 3-4 weeks of pregnancy, a baby is already fully developed and is just getting bigger.” Despite acknowledging risks to the baby of delivering early, more than half of the respondents agreed that “it is OK to schedule deliveries a week or two before the due date as long as the pregnancy is healthy” (See Table 1). A majority of respondents (60%+) cited prior pregnancy complications and doctor recommendations as appropriate reasons for scheduling a delivery. Only 15 percent thought convenience was acceptable (See Table 2).

The consumer survey was implemented by Healthy Start Coalitions in Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Hillsborough, Sarasota, Lee and Santa Rosa Counties. The 276 respondents represent consumers statewide in terms of race/ethnicity; half were privately insured and half were uninsured or covered by Medicaid. Respondents were either pregnant or had delivered a baby within the last 18 months. Most of the respondents (43%) were 24-29 years old with one-third having a college education or higher.

The consumer awareness campaign is being conducted in conjunction with two other March of Dimes supported efforts: the Florida Perinatal Quality Collaborative which focuses on improving hospital policies and practices on elective deliveries and a provider education initiative by the Lawton and Rhea Chiles Center at the University of South Florida. The results of the consumer survey are being used to measure the impact of the statewide campaign which will employ a variety of strategies, including social media, to get the word out to childbearing families.

To read the full report, visit <http://www.39weeksfll.org/florida-consumers-say-early-baby-delivery-is-safe/>

Figure 1: When is it Safe to Deliver?

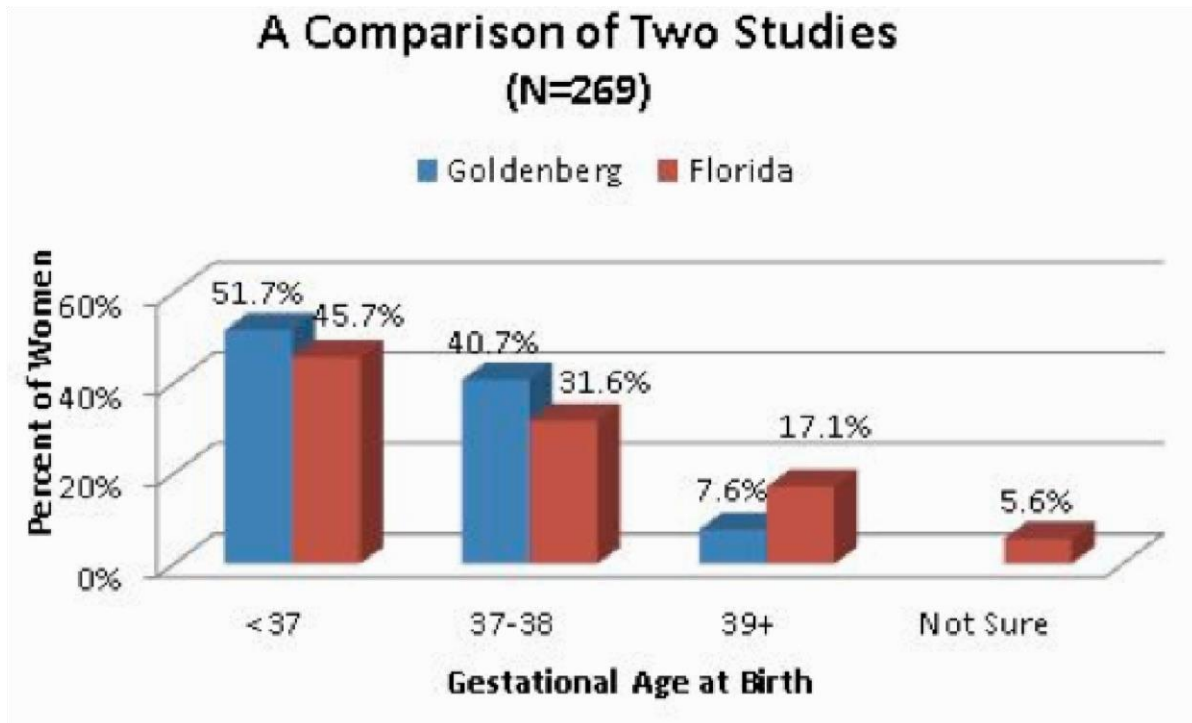


Figure 1: When is a Baby Full Term?

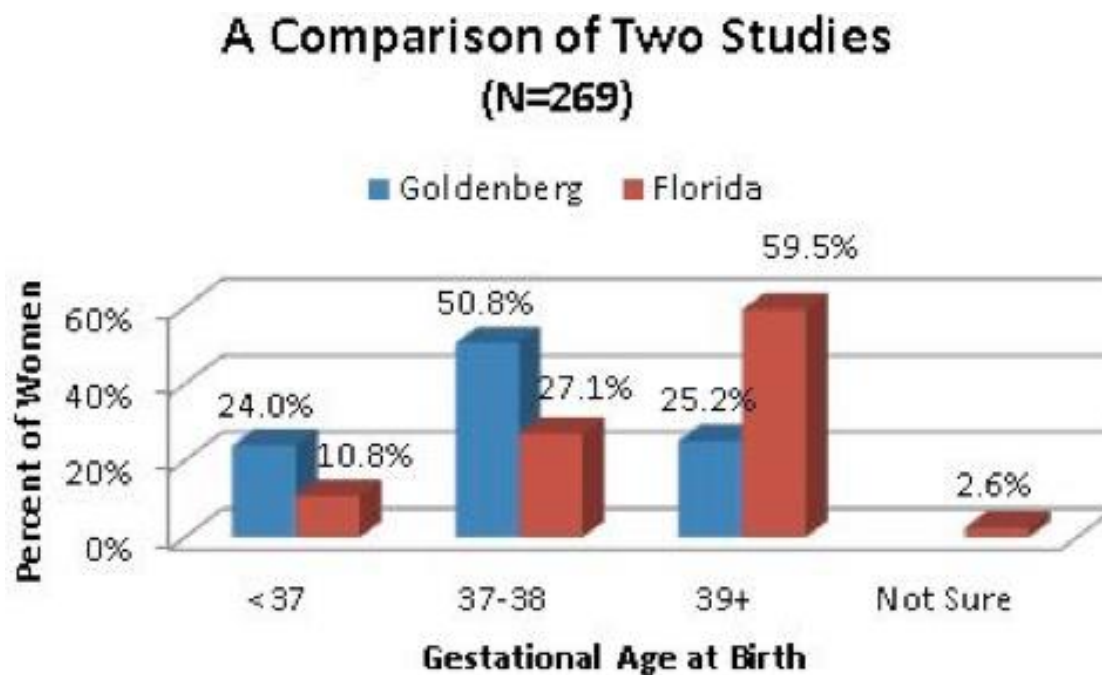


Table 1. Agreement with Statements About Pregnancies with No Complications (N=270)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The best delivery plan for a pregnant mom and her baby is to wait for labor to begin on its own.	49.1	38.6	8.2	2.6	1.5
In the last 3-4 weeks of pregnancy, a baby is already fully developed and is just getting bigger.	16.2	45.5	7.9	23.7	6.8
Some doctors and hospitals encourage inducing labor for scheduling convenience.	12.0	38.6	16.5	23.6	9.4
Some doctors and hospitals encourage C-sections and inducing labor to reduce malpractice lawsuits.	10.6	26.4	27.2	25.3	10.6
If a pregnancy is healthy, there is nothing wrong with parents planning an induced delivery with their doctor to have their baby at a certain day and time.	7.2	26.2	20.2	27.8	18.6
Even if your pregnancy has no medical complications, having a baby by C-section has many benefits.	4.5	13.9	19.1	39.7	22.8

Table 2. Appropriate Reasons for Scheduling or Inducing Delivery (N=273)

	% of Respondents
Prior pregnancy complications	67.8
Doctor recommendation	64.5
History of rapid labor	31.1
Living far away from the hospital	22.3
Wanting to be sure the delivery is performed by a certain doctor	21.2
Scheduling convenience (ensuring family is in town, to avoid a schedule conflict, etc.)	15.4
Uncomfortable/tired of being pregnant	7.3
Friend(s)/relative(s) scheduled their births and recommend it	2.6
None of these reasons are acceptable	12.8
Other reasons provided: Medical Emergency (6), Health concern (2), Baby grew too big (2), >40 weeks (2), GBS, multiple fetuses.	

Reaching Out to Hispanic Families and Fathers

Crafting culturally appropriate and targeted messages for fathers and others can help to create a supportive environment for pregnant women as they consider delivery options. A series of focus groups was held as part of **Think 39 Weeks! Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait!** in West Palm Beach, Tampa, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale and Miami-Dade County to explore attitudes and beliefs about the importance of letting labor begin on its own, and identify common sources of health information. Participants were predominately Hispanic and African American; half of the groups only included men and half included only women.

Impact of Culture, Family, Friends and Provider

- Women who emigrated from another country with a Hispanic culture indicated that it was very common (almost the norm) to deliver their babies through planned inductions. Folklore remedies for certain issues were also common.
- Although parents learn about pregnancy-related issues from many sources, their trust level increases as the credibility of the person, especially one knowledgeable of the mother, increases.
- Family members and friends may be effective advocates for pregnant women but may also be a formidable source of resistance if they have had positive experiences from an early delivery.
- Messages about when it is safe to deliver are often confusing. Parents are told that after 36 weeks, the baby will be fine. Parents and providers choose to induce early for the sake of convenience rather than waiting those extra few weeks because the need to schedule around social supports and work are significant issues.

“If you could shave a week or two off of that I don’t see nothing wrong with that. As long as the babies good to go and everything’s fine I don’t see any issues.”

“It’s scary when you are hearing the percentage of doctors that are scheduling for certain reasons, pushing C-sections, you want to trust in your doctor. Sometimes you don’t want to go against your doctor.”

- Convenience is not limited to the families. Providers can be more efficient and meet patient wishes by scheduling inductions.
- Beyond convenience, there is also lack of knowledge concerning the risk of having a C-section and confusion about the accuracy of due dates.



“I prefer a C-section. I mean it’s a pretty selfish reason I have a crazy phobia of natural child birth. I was induced and we were going to go for it to try the natural. I was in labor for 6 or 7 hours and I didn’t dilate..., then I had a C-section. I’m happy I had a C-section and I would probably choose C-section if I got pregnant again.”

Role of the Baby's Father and Other Advocates



- The father of the baby wants to be involved and has a supportive role to the mother who generally has the final decision-making authority because it involves her life and health as well as the baby's.
- As more women are having children without a husband and the father may not be involved in the pregnancy, this supportive role is often taken over by other individuals. In the Hispanic culture, the role of the pregnant woman's mother as well as other family members is important. It is good to get her "buy-in", especially from foreign-born mothers who may see early inductions as normal.

"Ultimately you don't really have a choice – it is whatever she wants to do. At the end of the pregnancy as the thought process follows through you might say hey I would like you to do this but she talks to doctor, talks to her friends and friends say well girl I did it this way so you should do it this was cause this way is easier for me then next thing you know that's the way they go."

Key Findings

The overarching finding is that the desire to do what is right for the baby and the mother is at the core of most delivery plans. Parents and their advocates need the tools and supports to sort through the seemingly endless flow of information and identify reputable sources. They also need effective strategies for triangulating the information from various sources.

Providers could disseminate a guide of reputable sources for more information to parents as a way to empower them with reliable information that is consistent with what is discussed in the prenatal visits. Giving parents and their support systems information about the importance of waiting if there are no medical reasons for inducing labor could significantly impact this trend in elective deliveries. Additionally, providing education materials of the benefits and risks to each delivery method as well as the incidence of these risks to consumers could help them make better decisions for their specific situation. Leverage technology! The internet and social media offer powerful educational tools.

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PLANNING YOUR ACTIVITY, EVENT

- **Convene key partners**

Your membership, March of Dimes representatives, local hospitals, other maternal and child health organizations, consumer advocates

- **Decide on your focus**

Consumers? General public? Health care providers? Pregnant women? Healthy Start and MomCare participants?

- **Brainstorm!**

What works best to grab attention in your community? Special events? Press conferences? Local celebrities? Health fairs? Displays at malls or parks? Local data and stories linked to March of Dimes Prematurity Report Card? Think out of the box!

- **Assign tasks**

Offer everyone an opportunity to get involved. Sharing responsibilities and resources lightens everyone's load. Establish a "to-do" list and timeline.

- **Follow-up**

Email reminders keep everyone on track. Communication is key!

- **Share your plans!**

Send your plans and updates to <http://www.39weeksfl.com/contribute-to-the-39weeksfl-blog/>.

- **Celebrate & build on your success!**

What worked? What didn't work? How can you build on your success and identify other opportunities to promote **Think 39 Weeks! Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait!**

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Few opportunities are greater to earn visibility than establishing links to nationally recognized events and activities. The annual observance of National Prematurity Awareness Month is the single most valuable opportunity to generate awareness about the **Think 39 Weeks!** campaign and the complementary work that you and collaborators are doing to reduce the poor birth outcomes and risks associated with premature births.

As you develop your “**Think 39 Weeks!**” story, it is important to share that Florida is one of the nation’s leaders in pre-term births. While the statistics may not be encouraging, the efforts and investment the March of Dimes is making to address it is incredibly valuable. Go ahead and share the grade earned on the annual March of Dimes Premature Report Card; however, quickly follow-up with details on the strategies and interventions developed that will lead to improved outcomes by 2020.

Other National Observances

Health Equity Week of Action – January 2014
National Public Health Week – April 7-13, 2014
National Women’s Health Week – May 11-17, 2014
Breastfeeding Month – August
National Infant Mortality Awareness Month - September
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Awareness Month - October
Child Health Day – October 6, 2014
National Breast Cancer Awareness Month – October
March for Babies – (Vary)

Your work is much too important to only share in November. Explore and consider other opportunities throughout the year to educate the public about the programs and initiatives that are improving lives.

When We Want Them

The news media are simply a conduit to sharing your message with the public. Yet, you must have an understanding of the messengers, their target audiences and how to reach them. It is important to develop and maintain a list of area journalists who cover stories that relate to health, nonprofit, lifestyle and local features.

Media lists are developed by contacting outlets or reviewing articles and news reports to identify journalists who most often cover topics most affiliated with health or your desired subject area. While it is not uncommon for reporters to cover many topics, there are some who have a specific niche or beat. You should know this when pitching your stories to ensure that they include key language and facts that are of most interest to readers.

News is what the news media say it is. Don’t be easily discouraged if your stories aren’t immediately picked up. You must find ways to make your stories creative and relevant.

Media sources include the following:

- Print - Daily, weekly and regional newspapers, and subject area magazines
- Electronic - Local television, cable and radio outlets
- Partners - Web site links, newsletters, community events and activities

Print

Please contact the reporter three to five days prior to your event or activity. Contact includes sending an email with a news release or media alert that is an attachment and included in the body of the email. Reporters receive dozens of pitches each day so it is highly encouraged to have your information easily accessible by including it in the email.

Limit attachments, which can create large files that can be blocked by mailbox size limits. Follow-up with a telephone call or reminder email the day prior to the event, detailing the unique aspect(s) of your activity and its importance to the community. Ask yourself who cares and be prepared to share that with the reporter.

Please note that magazines operate with deadlines that are two to three months in advance.

Electronic

News releases and media alerts are tools that are also used to communicate with television and radio stations. Assignment editors are those who review information received and determine its news value. These determinations are made during early morning meetings between reporters. As recommended for print media, send your news release to the TV or radio station three to five days prior to your event. Follow-up with telephone calls the day before and day of the event. Specify information about interview opportunities, photos, and visual features that will be available.

It is strongly advised to contact reporters during the early morning hours (before 9 a.m.). For television, your goal is to catch them before their morning meetings. For radio, the goal is to reach reporters before their popular morning drive-time shows.

Partners

Partners often add credibility and increase visibility to the work we do each day. As a result, it is valuable to consider them as vehicles for sharing information with their audiences. As with traditional journalists, it is important to do your homework. Familiarize yourself with activities for which they've conducted or related work they are leading in the community. Contact them to request opportunities to link to their Web site, be featured in their newsletter or event calendar.

When They Want Us

It is just as important to maintain the same level of interest and enthusiasm displayed when we want the media as it is when they want us. Sensitivity to deadlines, responsiveness and credibility are important attributes to demonstrate when building relationships with media representatives.

When reporters contact you, they are seeking to develop stories that will interest their audiences. Your only responsibility is to help them tell that story by personalizing the issue, sharing why it exists and how your organization is addressing it.

With multiple health-based organizations that share a similar mission of improving the lives of families and children, there may be some confusion about the services provided by your organization. If you receive inquiries or calls about issues that don't include areas supporting infant or maternal health, do not seek to speculate, share your opinion or speak on behalf of any other organization. Refer them to the appropriate agency, if appropriate, or contact the March of Dimes Florida Communications Florida Marketing and Communications office at 954.772.0013.

Keep track of all media inquiries and responses provided.

MEDIA INQUIRY

☐ COMPLETED

Date _____

Time _____

Name _____

Station/
Publication _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Purpose of Call _____

Specific
Questions/Topics _____

Deadline _____

Action Needed _____

Results _____

MEDIA INTERVIEW TIPS

Do's

- Do your homework. Familiarize yourself with updated statistics and pertinent information – locally, regionally and nationally.
- Always prepare. Identify three key points you want to make and use them early and often, despite what questions you may be asked.
- Personalize the issue by selecting a representative who may have an experience of example that can help reinforce your points.
- Maintain eye contact with the reporter.
- Use language that does not include technical jargon or professional acronyms.
- Request topic areas and anticipate questions the reporter will ask.
- Offer to provide additional resources and information that may help the reporter expand his or her story.
- Speak confidently. You are the expert.
- Keep all responses short, concise, and complete.
- Relax. Smile.

Don'ts

- Don't say anything you do not want reported. Avoid "off the record" comments.
- Don't assume the reporter has background or existing knowledge about your work or the subject.
- Don't seek to respond if you don't have a clear understanding of the question.
- Don't forget to reemphasize key point(s) as your closing message.
- Don't make facial expressions or gestures that demonstrate anger, frustration or uncertainty.
- Don't seek to fill empty space by talking excessively or expanding on questions. You may say something you regret.
- Don't wear distracting clothing or accessories (patterns, hats, noisy jewelry, etc.)
- Avoid white or cream-colored clothing on television, and opt for bold, bright colors.
- Don't look at the camera.
- Don't expect for the news outlet to provide you with copies of the interview. Collect it yourself or subscribe to a news service to purchase copies.

GETTING NOTICED

There is no shortage of news stories. While that may be good news for the journalists responsible for filling the pages, airwaves and networks with information, that is not good news for the hundreds seeking to reach them. The key to getting your story covered is to present information that is complete and creative. Is your story unique? Does it include compelling statistics and relevant information for general audiences?

If a reporter can say yes to these questions, he or she may be very likely to say yes to your pitch.

Make your story relevant. For example, Prematurity Awareness Month includes the Thanksgiving holiday, a time for family celebrations. Often times, the news media feature recipes during the weeks preceding the holiday. Send a news release that includes a recipe for a healthy pregnancy or offer “Food for Thought,” table topics and facts that families can discuss and share around the dinner table.

For television and radio audiences, contact reporters to offer them a Prematurity Awareness Quiz. Encourage them to test their knowledge about the myths surrounding the last weeks of pregnancy and infant health. This may also provide them an opportunity to feature a weekly fact or post the quiz on their Web site or link to yours throughout the month of November. These types of efforts can highlight your month-long events and awareness activities.

The Pitch Test

Is it unique – statistics that reveal the first/most or last/least

Are there local or national ties?

Is it timely?

Are there visual opportunities?

Will it be of great interest to general audiences?



MEDIA TOOLS

News Releases

A news release or press release is the most effective way to reach and engage with the media. It will influence and determine the impression a reporter has or develops of your organization. As a result, it is critical that information is well-written, focused and presented in the proper format.

It is most common for journalists to write using an inverted pyramid style. This style features the important facts at the very beginning, followed by explanations and expansions of information. Space and time limitations may only permit the first paragraph of your release to be featured. So, be clear about your purpose and organization early.

News releases should:

- Answer who, what, where, when, why and how
- Be written in third person
- Include a quote from a leader/authority figure
- Feature compelling statistics along with a human touch
- Be no more than two pages; Include –more- at bottom if an additional page(s) follow
- Use short, concise sentences to summarize your information
- Specify the date the information is to be released to the public (FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)
 - Include the name, phone number and email address of the contact person where additional information can be secured
- Feature a creative and descriptive headline
- Be sent five days prior to your need or notice
- End with a paragraph that identifies your organization's mission and Web site, followed by ###

Media Alerts

Often times, our goal is to convince media representatives to attend an event rather than promote an issue. In this instance, media alerts or advisories are the tools for communicating with the media.

Like press releases, media alerts should answer what, when, where and contact information and should be sent three days in advance. It is also advised to list special guests and interview and photo opportunities that may be available to media. Be sure to schedule these interviews during times when attendance and activities are at peak periods. This offers great exposure and communicates the impact of the services provided to citizens and communities.

Press Conferences

One of the biggest mistakes that professionals make is hosting press conferences to announce events and activities. Press conferences should only be reserved for key announcements and critical messages. By hosting press conferences with regularity, the media are less inclined to come due to their inability to decipher and determine when you have an important announcement.

When you issue a notice for a press conference, you are instructing the media to alter their schedule and make you/your organization a priority. Priority messages should include regional or national statistics or feature recognized persons in which to interview.

Media should be contacted (via a media alert/advisory) three to five hours prior to the scheduled conference. Avoid noon and evening times when television broadcasts and newspaper deadlines are eminent.

Opinion Articles/Editorials

Opinion articles and op-ed pieces are named for their placements – opposite the editorial page in a newspaper. These are powerful tools for influencing citizens, policymakers and leaders. Editorials allow you to deliver your messages directly without filter, unlike news stories that only cover facts

Op-ed commentary should be prepared with great thought. The first and most critical thought is timing. The issue must be relevant to the public and the commentary should provoke heightened awareness or address community concern. Additional tips for you to consider are:

- **Length** – While general guidelines require op-eds to be 500 to 800 words, you should clarify your newspaper's requirements often found on their Web site.
- **Newsworthiness** – The most effective op-ed features take a local issue and link or tie it to a regional or national story. National Prematurity Awareness Month can be easily linked to a hospital that is building a new maternity or neonatal care unit.
- **Credibility** – Share the experience and expertise you bring to the issue or subject. Identify your role in the organization – executive director, board member, former client – and how your organization is addressing the challenge that is being posed. Include a brief bio line at end.
- **Contact** – Don't let your first communication with the newspaper editor be your submission. Reach out to him or her early and share your interest and request guidance on your submission – when is the largest readership, deadlines, word count, etc. Submit one week prior to desired printing.
- **Quality** – Use three points or five-paragraphs to highlight your argument, with the last paragraph issuing a challenge or charge to the community for solutions.
- **Advocacy** – While newspapers would rather not see the editorial you submitted in multiple newspapers, you should use it to send to legislators and community representatives to demonstrate your advocacy efforts

Letters to the Editor

A letter to the editor is also opinion-based commentary that is most often written to support or refute a previously published article or issue. It is important to cite the article and its contents, ensuring that persons who may have missed it have an opportunity to understand your points and approach to the issue.

Many elected officials and community leaders read letters to the editor to gauge public opinion on various issues. So, it is critical to ensure that your letters are timely, well-written and create an impression of credibility and widespread support.

They should also be:

- **Brief and concise.** While general guidelines specify 150-200 words, you should determine your newspaper's submission guidelines found on the editorial page or publication Web site.
- **Specific** – Identify and reference the article to which you are addressing.
- **Compelling** – Determine a new way to address the issue and share unique solutions to addressing it.
- **Supportive** – Recognize persons, legislative action or organizations that are doing quality work surrounding the issue.
- **Shared** – Disseminate to publications with smaller circulations, which yield greater placement results.
- **Free from spelling and grammatical errors.**
- **Include writer's contact information.**
- **Invite recognized leaders or advocacy groups to co-sign a letter with you or prepare their own.**

Public Service Announcements (PSA)

Television and radio stations are required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to donate specified amounts of airtime to serve the community. Often, announcements are made about various events and activities being held for the public. These messages are often created from public service announcements, also known as PSAs.

A short, written message that is presented in audio or visual form, PSAs are educational tools that range from 10 to 60 seconds in length. While PSAs can be produced independently with technical and financial resources, many are prepared to be read by on-air radio or television personalities.

When determining when and how to use PSAs, consider the following:

- Most stations use 30-second PSAs
- Know your target audience and select radio stations that serve that audience
- Include specific language to motivate or inspire action
- Use simple language and a conversational tone
- Follow the inverted pyramid writing style used to develop news releases
- Keep it short – As a general guide, PSA time length and word counts are 15 seconds – 30 words; 30 seconds – 60 words; and 60 seconds – 120 words

Social Media

In addition to traditional outreach methods, organizations are leveraging social media resources to generate information about themselves and their efforts. The Coalitions are no exception, as we seek to engage the public through sharing of personalized messages and information.

Social media should not be an addition to our outreach efforts but an integration into our existing work.

Useful social media tools to promote the 39 Weeks Campaign:

Think 39 Weeks! Website – Websites are often the first place people will go to secure information. It should be current and complete with details pertaining to the campaign as well as summaries of month-long activities during Prematurity Awareness Month and link to related social media pages. The **Think 39 Weeks!** initiative has its own website, www.39weeksfl.org.

Blogs – Blogs are increasing in popularity and serve as a tool for building interest in organizations and activities. In addition to posting event information, organizations can receive questions and comments from followers. There are several ways you can use the **Think 39 Week!** website and blog to promote the campaign and your efforts during Prematurity Awareness Month and year-round.

- Link to the **Think 39 Weeks!** website from your own Healthy Start Coalition website and encourage other partners to do the same.
- Check the website frequently for updated blog posts and pages with useful information to share. Share the blog posts and pages on your own website/blog and on your social media pages including Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.
- Submit guest blog posts about the events you are hosting in honor of Prematurity Awareness Month via the guest blogger form on the website at <http://www.39weeksfl.com/contribute-to-the-39weeksfl-blog/>. Posts can promote the event prior to its scheduled date and/or to share the event's success afterward. You can also post about other topics pertaining to the **Think 39 Weeks!** campaign. Guest blogs can cover a variety of topics, including the importance of the last weeks of pregnancy, staying comfortable in the last weeks of pregnancy, healthy recipes containing folic acid for pregnant moms, nursery ideas, baby shower ideas and much more!

Email – Email remains a powerful communications tool. Develop and maintain a list of community leaders, citizens, legislators and donors who share your mission as potential recipients of e-newsletters sent via email. Include links to your social media sites at the bottom of your newsletter, encouraging people to visit and support those pages. Consider promoting the **Think 39 Weeks!** website and social media pages in your email blasts as well. Some other ideas include:

- Send an e-newsletter dedicated to the **Think 39 Weeks!** campaign, pulling blog posts from the website for content. Include direct links to the individual social media pages and encourage readers to follow the blog and social media pages. Send the newsletter to your normal distribution lists.
- Join our **Think 39 Weeks!** mailing list. Visit the homepage, www.39weeksfl.org, and add your e-mail address to the mailing list using the form at the top of the homepage. Encourage your networks to do the same. This is also a great way to receive shareable content on a regular basis.



Facebook –The social-networking site Facebook can be used in a variety of ways to share updates and activities. You can post information, photos, features and invitations (with RSVPs) about your Prematurity Awareness Month events and activities. All these items can also be shared, expanding reach of general audiences and their networks. The Facebook page for the **Think 39 Weeks!** campaign can be found at www.facebook.com/39WeeksFL. There are many ways Facebook can expand our **Think 39 Weeks!** campaign efforts, especially during Prematurity Awareness Month. Here are some ways you can utilize Facebook to expand the reach of the **Think 39 Weeks!** campaign:

- “Like” the 39 Weeks Florida Facebook page, found at www.facebook.com/39WeeksFL.
- Share posts from the 39 Weeks Florida account with your Facebook followers and encourage them to like the page as well.
- Comment on the 39 Weeks Florida Facebook posts.
- Post your own information, tips and tidbits on the 39 Weeks Florida Facebook page, including updates about your Prematurity Awareness Month activities.
- Post relevant facts about Prematurity Awareness Month on your Facebook page, linking back to our 39 Weeks Florida Facebook page and website. See some sample posts below.



Twitter – Twitter serves as a great resource for announcing events and offering frequent updates using small snippets of text. It allows you to post short messages (140 characters or less in length) called “tweets” in real time online, that can be shared or “re-tweeted” by others. By tweeting multiple messages throughout the month, organizations are building awareness and increasing advocacy among its followers, as well as driving traffic to their websites, blogs and social media pages. Here are some ways you can utilize Twitter to expand the reach of the **Think 39 Weeks!** campaign: • Follow 39 Weeks Florida on Twitter at www.twitter.com/39WeeksFL.

- Re-tweet (share) 39 Weeks Florida’s tweets with your Twitter followers and encourage them to follow the page as well.
- Tweet your own relevant facts about Prematurity Awareness Month and link back to the 39 Weeks Florida Twitter page and website. See some sample tweets below.

YouTube – Videos are creative options for featuring and sharing event highlights and services. YouTube videos should be less than one minute long and include compelling testimonials from clients or experts. Avoid use of copyrighted music, photos and messages. Be original! Once you create a video and upload it to YouTube, remember to share it through your website and social media pages, as well as on the **Think 39 Weeks!** website and social media pages.

Sample Facebook Posts

November is Prematurity Awareness Month, when the March of Dimes focuses everyone's attention on the impact premature birth has on babies and families. Visit www.39weeksfl.org to learn more about healthy pregnancies!

November 17th is World Prematurity Day. Help spread the word about the serious problem of premature birth. Visit www.facebook.com/39WeeksFL and update your status!

Every year, more than 13 million babies are born prematurely worldwide. A million will die before their first birthday. Learn how to reduce the risks of premature birth at www.39weeksfl.org/expectant-parents/.

Premature birth is the #1 cause of death during the first month of life. Even babies born just a few weeks too soon can face serious health challenges and are at risk for lifelong disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, lung problems, and vision and hearing loss. Find out why the last weeks of pregnancy are so important at <http://www.39weeksfl.com/expectant-parents/>.

Too often, babies are born just a week or two early for non-medical reasons. Babies aren't fully developed until 39 full weeks in the womb. Important developments of their brains, lungs and eyes occur in the last few weeks of pregnancy. If your pregnancy is healthy, wait for labor to begin on its own. Learn more at www.39weeksfl.org

Did you know that a baby's brain at 35 weeks weighs only two-thirds of what it will weigh at 39-40 weeks? If your pregnancy is healthy, it's best to stay pregnant at least 39 Weeks. Visit www.facebook.com/39weeksfl.org for more pregnancy tips and tidbits!

In Florida, 1 in 7 babies are born too soon. That is far too many! Help us spread the word during Prematurity Awareness Month. Visit www.39weeksfl.org

How much do you know about what's happening in the last weeks of pregnancy? Take the quiz!
<http://39weeksfl.com/39-weeks-quiz/>

Sample Tweets

Nov is Prematurity Awareness Month. Visit www.39weeksfl.org to learn more about healthy pregnancies! #PAM #Think39Weeks

Nov 17 is World Prematurity Day. Help us & @marchofdimes spread the word about the impact of premature birth. Retweet! #PAM #Think39Weeks!

Each year more than 13 million babies are born prematurely. Learn how to reduce your risk at www.39weeksfl.org/expectant-parents/. #PAM #Think39Weeks

Babies born just a few weeks early can face health challenges & disabilities. Stay pregnant #39Weeks. Find out more at www.39weeksfl.org

Babies aren't fully developed until #39weeks in the womb. The brain, lungs, eyes & ears are still growing! Visit www.39weeksfl.org #PAM

If your pregnancy is healthy, the best labor plan for mom & baby is to wait for labor to begin on its own. Visit www.39weeksfl.org #PAM

A baby's brain at 35 weeks weighs 2/3rds of what it will weigh at 39-40 weeks. Visit www.39weeksfl.org for more. #Think39Weeks #PAM

How much do you know about what's happening in the last weeks of pregnancy? Take the quiz!
<http://www.39weeksfl.com/39-weeks-quiz/>

Sample Resources/Materials

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: **Staff person's Name**
Title
Phone Number

“A Life-Saving Table Topic Families Will Be Thankful For”

Statewide Campaign Launched to Reduce Increases in

Premature Births

November is Prematurity Awareness Month

CITY, Fla., November 1, 2013 – Would you please pass the cranberry sauce and the facts?

Just as families are preparing to gather together in celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday, the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions (FAHSC) and March of Dimes Florida Chapter are launching a campaign as part of Prematurity Awareness Month (November). “*Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait*” is designed to raise awareness about the myths and risks of premature births, as well as educate the public about the importance of maintaining a healthy pregnancy for at least 39 weeks.

According to studies, a growing number of babies are delivered between 37 and 39 weeks, prior to the full-term gestation period of 40 weeks. Many of these births occur as a result of planned or scheduled deliveries that are not medically necessary. Nationally, labor induction rates during these weeks have more than doubled from 9.5 percent in 1990 to nearly 23 percent in 2006. In Florida, preterm birth rates increased from 12.8 percent in 2000 to 13.5 percent in 2009. As a result, FAHSC and March of Dimes Florida have teamed up to launch a statewide community education campaign, “*Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait*,” in observance of Prematurity Awareness Month. Hospitals in various Florida cities are also participating in a statewide quality initiative to reduce elective deliveries.

Non-medically required preterm deliveries pose increased risks to an infant’s life including neonatal hospitalizations, death, respiratory stresses, developmental delays and learning disabilities.

“We are pleased that our coalition and community have been selected to lead statewide education efforts to reduce the risk of babies who are affected by late preterm deliveries and non-medically necessary inductions and c-sections,” said **NAME**, Executive Director, Healthy Start Coalition (**CITY**). “There is an alarming misconception among many that a baby is full-term and ready for delivery prior to 39 weeks...so, unfortunately, we see a lot of mothers seeking to schedule C-sections or induced deliveries when there is no medical reason to do so. This campaign will help families in our community understand that the last weeks of pregnancy actually do count.”

-more-

Founded in 1938, the March of Dimes is a national voluntary health agency whose mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. It funds programs of research, community services, education and advocacy. The March of Dimes Florida is funding the *“Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait”* statewide campaign.

The Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions is a statewide network of 32 Healthy Start Coalitions founded in 1991 that exchange and disseminate resources and information designed to improve maternal and child health. FAHSC was awarded a March of Dimes Florida Chapter Community grant in March to educate Florida women, families, medical professionals and providers about preterm risks.

#

Recipe for: A Healthy Pregnancy

Encourage all women & mothers you know to:

1. Reduce the risk of premature birth by maintaining healthy pregnancies for at least 39 weeks
2. Take a multivitamin with folic acid each day
3. Avoid alcohol, smoking and drugs
4. Exercise and eat fruits and vegetables regularly
5. Be safe and responsible in your relationships
6. Keep all doctors' appointments
7. Learn about the signs of premature labor
8. Choose breastfeeding - best for mothers and babies
9. Put babies to sleep alone on their backs in cribs to prevent sleep-related deaths
10. Teach babysitters, grandparents and friends how to care for babies



Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait!

In one short week, families will celebrate Thanksgiving with their closest friends and relatives. Preparations for the perfect Thanksgiving meal begin well in advance of the celebration, and few would rush this process. Yet too often, families don't exercise the same patience and care when it comes to their pregnancies. Many families are choosing to schedule their deliveries early, even if there is no medical need, increasing the chance that a baby will be born before he is full term. According to recent studies, delivering even a few weeks early - before 39 weeks - is associated with increased admissions to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), breathing and feeding problems, developmental delays and even death. Unless there is a medical need, waiting for labor to begin on its own is best for mom and baby. Healthy babies are worth the wait! To learn more, visit www.marchofdimes.com/39weeks.



If you are pregnant and need help finding services, just dial 2-1-1.
Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition | 644 Cesery Blvd., Ste. 210 | 904.723.5422 | www.nefhealthystart.org

Sample Media Alert

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 14, 2013

Contact:

NAME, TITLE

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL

“State Improving But Yet to Make the Grade in Infant Health”

WHAT:

On a visit to city hall this month – Prematurity Awareness Month, you may think you’re in an elementary school classroom. More than ## desks are on display, each representing the number of empty kindergarten classrooms in NAME OF COUNTY this year. Each year, more than ## children will never realize the joys and excitement of a first day of school experience. They died before their first birthdays. Preterm birth is the leading cause of death among newborns in the U.S. According to the March of Dimes, the state of Florida is improving its premature birth efforts and birth outcomes, earning a D letter grade in a 2012 Premature Birth Report card released last week. In 2011, Florida also earned a D, an improvement from an F the previous year.

A key strategy in reducing preterm births and poor birth outcomes among Florida infants is Healthy Start Coalition’s partnership with the March of Dimes to educate women, parents, and families about health practices that contribute to poor birth outcomes. Information on infant and maternal health will be disseminated to visitors.

WHEN: DAY, November ##, - DAY, November ##, 2013

WHERE: LOCATION - ADDRESS

GENERAL: According to national studies, a growing number of babies are delivered prematurely between 37 and 39 weeks. Labor induction rates during these weeks have more than doubled from 9.5 percent in 1990 to nearly 23 percent in 2006. Many of these births occur as a result of planned or scheduled deliveries that are not medically necessary, leading to a statewide community education campaign, “Think 39 Weeks: Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait,” in observance of Prematurity Awareness Month. Non-medically required preterm deliveries pose increased risks to an infant including neonatal hospitalizations, death, respiratory stresses, developmental delays and learning disabilities.

Established in YEAR, AREA NAME Healthy Start Coalition is dedicated to reducing infant mortality rates and improving the health of children, childbearing women, and families.

###

Sample Press Conference

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Name, Title

Phone Number Email Address

Is Our Community Making the Grade In Infant and Maternal Health?

CITY, Fla., November ##, 2013 – NAME, Executive Director, Healthy Start Coalition will announce the grade earned in the latest Premature Birth Report card released by the national March of Dimes office. Launched last week in observance of National Prematurity Awareness Month, the report card evaluates states' efforts in addressing preterm births, uninsured women and poor health practices (smoking) among childbearing and pregnant women. Joining NAME will be (City Council Members, Board President, Client).

PRESS CONFERENCE

DAY, November ##, 2013

TIME

LOCATION/ADDRESS

###

Localizing the March of Dimes Report Card

As part of Prematurity Awareness Month, the March of Dimes releases a state-by-state annual Premature Birth Report Card. In 2012, Florida received a “D.”

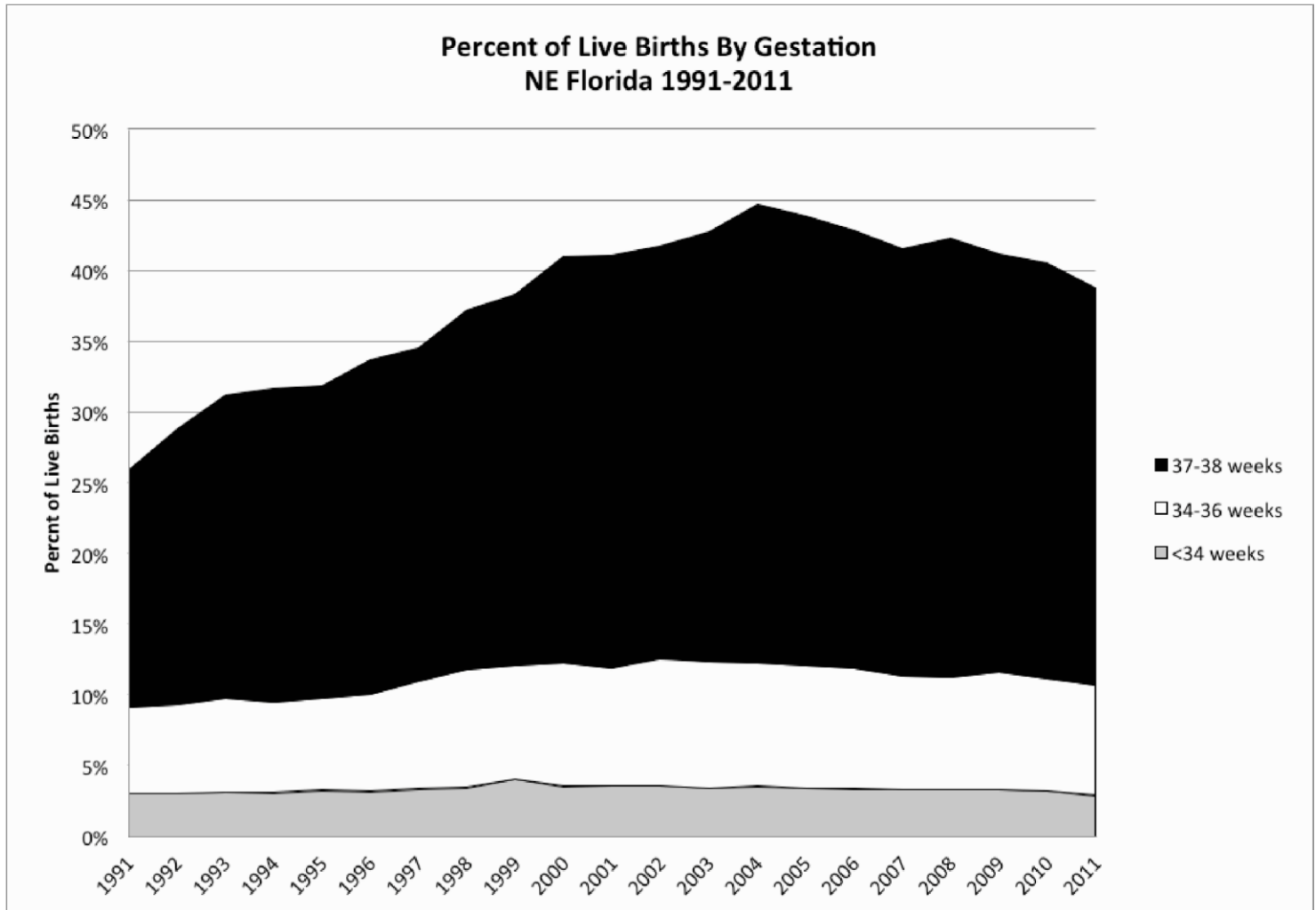
http://www.marchofdimes.com/mission/prematurity_reportcard.html

The release of this report card offers an important news “hook” that can be used to draw attention to the 39 Weeks: Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait campaign. The most effective way to do this is by calling attention to how your community stacks up against the state and U.S.

To help you “localize” the March of Dimes Premature Birth Report Card, here is a list of key indicators and sources where you can find data for your county:

Indicator	Definition	Source for Country Data
Preterm Birth (%)	Percent of all live births less than 37 Completed weeks gestation	Pre---Term Births by County (2. Select Measure under Modify Standard Report) available at Florida CHARTS-- Data Queries---Birth Counts: http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/chart.aspx
Late Preterm Birth (%)	Percent of all live births between 34 and 36 weeks gestation	Late Pre---Term Births by County (Modify Standard Report 4. Add Column Variable---Clinical Estimate of Gestation) available at Florida CHARTS--- Data Queries---Birth Counts: http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/chart.aspx
Uninsured Women (%)	Percentage of women with no source of health insurance	Florida County---level Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance (BFRSS) available at: http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/DisplayHTML.aspx?ContentType=0&ReportType=7243&year=2010&group=1&indNumber=0013 The Census Bureau's Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) program produces estimates of health insurance coverage for states and all counties by age, race, sex, ethnicity and income. http://www.census.gov/did/www/sahie/data/interactive/
Women smoking (%)	Percent of women who smoke; percent of women who smoked during pregnancy	Florida County---level Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance (BFRSS) available at: http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/DisplayHTML.aspx?ContentType=0&ReportType=7243&year=2010&group=2&indNumber=0010 Births By Year by Smoking Status by County of Residence available at Florida CHARTS ---Data Queries---Birth Counts: http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/chart.aspx

You can also use the Birth Query available on Florida CHARTS (<http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/chart.aspx>) to show how late preterm deliveries are impacting your community. Here is an example of a graph for Northeast Florida:



Sample Editorial Letter

For nearly ## years, Healthy Start Coalition has provided cooperative services and community based programs that improve the health of children, childbearing women, and families throughout the area. We recognize that our mission of infant and maternal health cannot be achieved alone. As a result, Healthy Start has teamed up with the March of Dimes to address the alarming rates of poor birth outcomes resulting from premature births. Preterm birth is the leading cause of newborn death in the U.S.

Last week in conjunction with Prematurity Awareness Month, the March of Dimes released a Premature Report Card that evaluates states' rates of premature births against the March of Dimes 2020 goal of 9.6 percent. The national rate is currently 12.2 percent. Florida earned a D on the 2012 report card that highlights uninsured and smoking women and late preterm birth outcomes. In 2011, Florida also earned a D, up from an F the previous year.

We are delighted that birth outcomes are continuing to improve in our area. However, these successes can only increase with the support and advocacy of community organizations, medical facilities and citizens. Studies demonstrate that the cost for low birth weight babies has an estimated annual economic impact of billions. While quality neonatal care offered at our local hospitals is an effective means to addressing pre-term births, the most effective approach is increasing pregnant women's awareness and participation in prenatal care programs. These successes save dollars but more importantly saves lives.

Please visit our Web site at #####.org to learn how you can partner with us during National Prematurity Awareness Month and throughout the year to strengthen the lives of babies and families throughout our area.

Sample Public Service Announcements

:30

Can't wait to meet your baby?

Healthy babies are worth the wait... A healthy pregnancy totaling at least 39 weeks reduces the risk of problems for you and your baby. Learn what to expect and more at www.marchofdimes.com/39weeks.

:45

As you prepare for your baby's arrival, make sure you're preparing for a healthy delivery. At 39 weeks, a baby's brain, lungs and liver are still developing. Reduce the risks for you and your baby by waiting at least 39 weeks. Healthy babies are worth the wait. Learn more at www.marchofdimes.com/39weeks.

:60

Dear Mom and Dad-

I'm so excited to meet you. I have ten fingers and ten toes, and still growing. In fact, my brain will reach its full size during the last weeks of our pregnancy. Waiting at least 39 weeks gives me the best chance at life and my college entrance exams. I'm worth the wait and so are you. www.marchofdimes.com/39weeks

marchofdimes.com/39weeks

Request Letter for Proclamation

DATE

NAME, TITLE (President)

_____ City Council

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE ZIP CODE

Dear The Honorable _____:

NAME Healthy Start Coalition is one of hundreds of organizations throughout the country gearing up to observe National Prematurity Awareness Month. Founded in YEAR as a statewide network of community based organizations charged with reducing Florida's high infant mortality and improving the lives of pregnant women and families, NAME Healthy Start Coalition provides health-based services to women of childbearing age, babies and families in NAMES of counties.

In celebration of National Prematurity Awareness Month, Healthy Start is planning to host and support a variety of weeklong activities that encourage and promote healthy behaviors for women and families. In the past, Council representatives (NAMES) have supported our work in serving communities with the greatest needs. This year is no exception as we invite each of you to share in the educational activities we are hosting throughout the month of November including . . . In addition, Healthy Start is requesting that a proclamation be issued by the _____ City Council in recognition of the nationally-recognized observance.

Can you please advise of the specific requirements or needs to support a proclamation to be issued by the _____ City Council during its DATE meeting? I thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you soon. I can be reached at ###.###-#### or via email at abcdefg@hijklmnop.com.

Sincerely,

NAME

Executive Director

DATE

Contact:

NAME

Phone Number

National Prematurity Awareness Month Proclamation
November 2013

Whereas, more than ## years ago, NAME Healthy Start Coalition was one of 32 networks established throughout the state to address Florida's alarming rates of infant mortality and improve the health of women, children and families;

Whereas, NAME Healthy Start Coalition has joined the March of Dimes and hundreds of organizations throughout the country in celebration of National Prematurity Awareness Month (November);

Whereas, National Prematurity Awareness Month, held annually in the month of November, raises awareness of women's health issues and empowers women to take responsibility for their health through increased knowledge about elective deliveries before 39 weeks and their impact on pre-term births ;

Whereas, the health of women prior to pregnancies has the greatest impact on successful birth outcomes and reduces incidents of infant mortality, low birth weight babies and difficult pregnancies;

Whereas, National Prematurity Awareness Month promotes the collaborative efforts of national, state, and community-based organizations, health partners and volunteers dedicated to increasing awareness of women's health issues and eliminating non-medically indicated deliveries;

Whereas, NAME Healthy Start Coalition operates more than a ### agencies and programs throughout NAMES of counties that provide well-women care, education, and preventive services that support at-risk women of childbearing age;

Whereas, NAME Healthy Start Coalition will kick-off National Prematurity Awareness Month with educational and enrichment ACTIVITIES including.....;

Whereas, NAME Healthy Start Coalition honors the work of city and community partners who share its commitment to improving the health and lives of babies, women and families throughout the area;

Now, therefore, I, **NAME, Mayor** of **CITY**, do hereby proclaim the month of November:

NATIONAL PREMATUREITY AWARENESS MONTH

I urge all citizens to commit to healthier choices for a healthier families and communities.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Seal of **[location]**, this **[day, example: "##th"]** day of November 2013

[Your/official's name],
[your/official's title]



Newspaper	Coalition	E-mail	Phone	Contact/ Notes
Apalachicola Times/ Port St. Joe Star Bay, Franklin, Gulf		tcroft@starfl.com	(850) 653-8868	Tim Croft
South Florida Times	Broward		(954) 356-9360	African American publication
Wakulla News	Capital Area	editor@thewakullanews.net	(850) 926-7102	
Capital Outlook	Capital Area	pressreleases@capitaloutlook.com	(850) 877-0105	African American publication
Hernando Today	Central	mterry@hernandotoday.com	(352) 544-5200	Michael Terry
Sumter County Times	Central	news@sctnews.com	(352) 793-2161	
Ana Maria Island Sun	Charlotte	news@amisun.com	(941) 778-3986	
Jackson County Floridan	Chipola	editorial@jcfloiridan.com	(850) 526-3614	
Washington County News/ Holmes County Times Advertiser	Chipola	news@chipleypaper.com	(850) 638-0212	
The County Record (Blountstown)	Chipola	robert@thecountyrecord.net	(850) 674-5041	Robert Turner
Calhoun Liberty Journal	Chipola	thejournal@fairpoint.net	(850) 643-3333	
Gulf Breeze News	Escambia	news@gulfbreezenews.com	(850) 932-8986	
Pensacola Voice	Escambia	info@pensacolavoice.com	(850) 434-6963	African American publication
Deland Beacon	Flagler, Volusia	info@beaconnonlinenews.com	(386) 734-4622	
Daytona Times	Flagler, Volusia	news@daytonatimes.com	(877) 352-4455	African American publication
Florida Keys Keynoter	Florida Keys	lkahn@keynoter.com	(305) 743-5551	Larry Kahn
Havana Herald	Gadsden County	nick@havanaherald.net	(850) 539-6586	Nick Bert
Gadsden County Times	Gadsden County	editor@gadcotimes.com	(850) 627-7649	
Florida Sentinel Bulletin	Hillsborough County	editor@flsentinel.com	(813) 248-1921	African American publication
Florida Courier	Hillsborough County	news@flcourier.com	(877) 352-4455	African American publication
La Gaceta	Hillsborough County	lagaceta@tampabay.rr.com	(813) 248-3921	Hispanic publication
Madison Enterprise Recorder	Jefferson, Madison, Taylor	news@greenepublishing.com	(850) 973-4141	
Monticello News	Jefferson, Madison, Taylor	monticellonews@embarqmail.com	(850) 997-3568	
Taco Times	Jefferson, Madison, Taylor	newsdesk@perrynewspapers.com	(850) 584-5513	
Miami Times	Miami-Dade	kmcneir@miamitimesonline.com	(305) 694-6216	African American publication
Alachua County Today	North Central	editor@alachuatoday.com	(386) 462-3355	
Levy County Journal	North Central	editor@levyjjournal.com	(352) 486-2312	
Chiefland Citizen/ Cedar Key Beacon	North Central	editor@chieflandcitizen.com	(352) 493-4796	
Putnam County Courier Journal	North Central	editor@jcnewspaper.com	(386) 698-1644	
Dixie County Advocate	North Central	editor@dcadvocate.net	(352) 498-3312	
Lake City Reporter	North Central	news@lakecityreporter.com	(386) 752-1293	
Nassau County Record	Northeast	editor@nassaucountyrecord.com	(904) 879-2727	
Clay Today	Northeast	greg@opclfa.com	(904) 264-3200	Greg Walsh
Baker County Press	Northeast	editor@bakercountypress.com	(904) 259-2400	
The Florida Star	Northeast	info@thefloridastar.com	(904) 766-8834	African American publication
Walton Sun	Okaloosa-Walton	news@waltonsun.com	(850) 267-4555	
El Sentinel	Orange County	rpalacio@orlandosentinel.com	(407) 420-5058	Orlando Sentinel's Hispanic paper - Rafael Palacio
Osceola News-Gazette	Osceola	news@osceolanewsgazette.com	(407) 846-7600	
Florida Sentinel Bulletin	Pinellas County	editor@flsentinel.com	(813) 248-1921	African American publication
Florida Courier	Pinellas County	news@flcourier.com	(877) 352-4455	African American publication
St. Pete Bulletin	Pinellas County	linda_spb@yahoo.com	(727) 321-1681	African American publication - Local News Reporter Linda Mobley
La Gaceta	Pinellas County	lagaceta@tampabay.rr.com	(813) 248-3921	Hispanic publication
Santa Rosa Press Gazette	Santa Rosa County	news@srpressgazette.com	(850) 623-2120	
Navarre Press	Santa Rosa County	news@navarrepress.com	(850) 939-8040	

