

May 2009

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National *preemie* Network News

Florida | Georgia | Illinois | Maryland | Minnesota | New York | Ohio | Oklahoma | Pennsylvania

Not a member yet? Join your state's network!

As a thought leader on prematurity issues, we hope you will join us to help preserve and improve the health of the nation's babies. For more information about your state's preemie network, please reference the state network contact information below.

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Announcing the Formation of Prematurity Networks in Oklahoma and Georgia

Oklahoma Infant Alliance

The Oklahoma Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (OKHMHCB) recently established the Oklahoma Infant Alliance to focus on issues impacting premature infants.

Under the leadership of Alliance Chair Raja Nandyal and OKHMHCB Co-Chair Carole Kenner, the Alliance will create broad-based support and a collective voice for improving the health care system for Oklahoma's premature infants, especially late preterm. The specific goals of the Alliance will be determined by the members, but the key focus of the group's efforts will be to improve the health and mortality rate of late preterm infants by addressing the needs of this at-risk population, their families and the health care community. The Alliance will work to address and respond to issues and concerns relating to access and continuum of care, educational and health disparities, legislative and advocacy initiatives and general awareness surrounding late preterm births across Oklahoma.

Georgia Preemie Network

On February 18, a group of stakeholders met to discuss the development of a coalition in Georgia to address and raise awareness of the issues facing premature babies. Attendees included representatives from the March of Dimes; Academy of Family Physicians; Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies; American Academy of Pediatrics; Voices for Georgia's Children and the American Lung Association. The group discussed the primary areas of concern in Georgia, which included providing health and dental care for children and pregnant women, low birth weight rates and health care coverage, as well as the need for a combined effort to address these issues. Following this informational meeting, three groups including the Georgia Academy of Family Physicians, Zoe Rose Memorial Foundation and the American Lung Association in Georgia, formally created a coalition effort. Additional discussions and meetings are planned in the coming weeks to continue conversations with interested organizations and determine the coalition's name, focus and priorities.

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MedImmune strives to cultivate long-term sustainable relationships with national and state organizations to optimize health outcomes for premature babies and their families. That's why MedImmune supports regional prematurity networks. These networks bring together interested parties focused on the health and well-being of premature babies.

**Prematurity networks located in Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania are funded and supported by MedImmune. Network contacts listed at each of these organizations are paid consultants of MedImmune.*

Network News



Florida Alliance for Healthy Babies

Prior to the 2009 Florida legislative session, the Florida Alliance for Healthy Babies implemented a communication campaign aimed at educating legislators about the Alliance and the issues surrounding prematurity. Prior to session, Alliance members met with nine key members of the Florida House and Senate to introduce the Alliance and encourage their support as advocates for the state's most vulnerable young citizens. Additionally, informational kits were hand-delivered to all Florida legislators. The Alliance also held its first NICU tour at the Winnie Palmer Hospital in Orlando, which was led by the hospital's nationally recognized NICU Director, Dr. David Auerbach, and attended by special guest State Representative Geraldine Thompson. Orlando's Central Florida News Channel 13 covered the tour and held individual interviews with the March of Dimes and parents of a NICU graduate.

Illinois Premature Infant Health Network

Increasingly, the Illinois Premature Infant Health Network (IPIHN) is becoming the meeting place and resource for individuals and organizations in both public and private sectors related to preemie health. Participation of state perinatal administrators and state legislators has enriched network discussions and project ideas, particularly around growing interest in early intervention issues in Illinois. At the most recent IPIHN meeting, members decided to schedule a separate meeting entirely devoted to exploring potential solutions for issues related to access to early intervention programs. This meeting will bring together state officials, private attorneys, public health advocates and service providers.

In addition, IPIHN is supporting the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP), a charter member, in its survey of all Level III NICU follow-up programs in the state. Based on feedback from the participating hospitals, ICAAP and IPIHN anticipate great results that will help improve access to care for premature infants in Illinois.

Maryland Premature Infant Health Network

The Maryland Premature Infant Health Network is working actively through its three work groups to improve healthcare quality and outcomes for infants born premature in Maryland. Work groups include advocacy, education and coordination. In March, the advocacy sub-group submitted written testimony on behalf of the Maryland Premature Infant Health Network to support HB 706, Electronic Health Records Regulation and Reimbursement. Network members support the proposed legislation with the expectation that it will help to improve standardized procedures for hospital discharge and follow-up care of infants born prematurely.

The education work group is focused on improving communication between county health departments and NICUs. Working with county health officials, they recently developed a Fetal and Infant Mortality Review contact list for NICUs to utilize upon hospital discharge.

Best Practices *Story*



New initiative emphasizes partnership between pediatric clinicians and families

The American Academy of Pediatrics, Pennsylvania Chapter worked with the PA Premature Infant Health Network to provide a presentation on the Medical Homes initiative they are implementing in practices across the state. The medical home model is an approach to health care that emphasizes the partnership between pediatric clinicians and families. The initiative, Educating Practices in Community Integrated Care, has trained 75 practices in medical home principles and has provided funding for more than 29 practices for care coordination. These practices represent:

- Six regions and 31 counties in PA;
- Urban, suburban and rural communities; and
- Hospital systems.

Finally, the coordination work group is building on the education effort to identify and implement a standard of care across the state for NICU discharge.

Minnesota Premature Infant Health Network

The Minnesota Premature Infant Health Network is comprised of 75 hard-working individuals dedicated to the welfare of premature infants and finding ways to bring additional stakeholders to this thriving network.

The first great victory of the network was the successful development of an updated Community Health Workers curriculum. The network assisted in inserting a comprehensive maternal/child component into the curriculum. Beginning April 1, community health workers throughout the state of Minnesota can be certified to assist their clients with high risk pregnancies and educate them on prematurity.

The public policy sub-group is working to get more legislative involvement in the network including coordinating a legislator NICU tour, forming a Legislative Prematurity Caucus, and scheduling legislators to speak at network meetings.

In April, the network will host an exhibit booth at the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians annual conference. Network members will staff the booth distributing network materials to recruit new members.

New York Premature Infant Health Network

In January 2009, the New York Premature Infant Health Network issued a statewide press release announcing its creation and a call to action for the legislature, community and health organizations, healthcare providers and parents to combine efforts to address the growing needs of premature infants and children in the state.

The network created three working groups to focus on education, resources and public policy. Currently, the resource committee is partnering with the United Way 211/311 regional directors to ensure network members' program/service information is included as a resource in each of the regional call centers database and to raise awareness of the regional call center opportunities for families with premature infant health concerns.

Dr. Jordan Kase of Maria Fareri Children's Hospital at Westchester Medical Center, will coordinate with the education committee to develop educational pieces for policymakers, families and the community about the importance of continuity of care for the families prior to the discharge of the baby.

In addition, the public policy subcommittee will be coordinating legislator NICU tours with key districts and organizing a statewide legislative briefing on prematurity.

National News

Preterm birth rate drops

March 25, 2009
Science Daily

The nation's preterm birth rate declined slightly in 2007—a finding that the March of Dimes hopes will prove to be the start of a new trend in improved maternal and infant health.

Preemie delivery tied to later heart woes for women

March 13, 2009
U.S. News & World Report

The things that affect a woman's reproductive health can also have an effect on her heart, new research shows.

National Preemie Network News, funded and sponsored by MedImmune, is a quarterly resource for sharing information about advocacy efforts across the nation focused on increasing quality health care access for premature infants.



Premature Infant Health Network of Ohio

At the network's last meeting in January, members determined four goals for 2009, including:

1. Scheduling two legislator NICU tours targeting southwest and northeast Ohio areas.
2. Investigating opportunities to participate in and support the Governor's Infant Mortality Task Force.
3. Determining education materials used in hospitals for parents/professionals and sharing with network members.
4. Developing a survey for parents of preemies to determine where the gaps are for care, education, ongoing supports, etc.

In addition, the network developed and distributed its first quarterly eNewsletter, Ohio Preemie News, to share best practices, materials and information. The newsletter serves as an avenue to look at consistencies and duplications across organizations so that members can make better use of time and funds.

The network also is working with the March of Dimes-Ohio Chapter to plan a prematurity summit in recognition of National Prematurity Awareness Day in November. The two-day summit will feature seminars for physicians, nurses and public health professionals on the topics of preconception/interconception, pregnancy/childbirth and the special care neonate.

Pennsylvania Premature Infant Health Network

In February 2009, the Pennsylvania Premature Infant Health Network met in three key locations throughout the state to craft a statewide representation of issues surrounding premature infant health needs and their families.

The first initiative of the education subcommittee is to partner with the Pennsylvania Academy of Pediatricians to develop a late preterm babies checklist for families and general pediatricians to help lower the rate of re-hospitalization of late preterm infants their first year of life.

Accessing and compiling statewide NICU discharge procedures and crafting a statewide consistent NICU discharge procedure model is a top priority for the access and continuity of care subcommittee.

In addition to the committee work, the network held a NICU tour in November at the Hershey Medical Center and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.