

# CARING FOR 2

Helping through every step of pregnancy...and beyond!

COLUMBUS, OHIO • PROJECT SUMMARY 2010



## WHO WE ARE

*Caring for 2 (CF2)* is a federally funded Healthy Start Project to improve birth outcomes for African American women, and helps build a coordinated local health system for maternal and infant health.

CF2 case management is an interdisciplinary team of community care coordinators, public health nurses and licensed social workers.

## WHAT WE DO

- In home visiting for pregnant women at high risk for poor birth outcomes such as prematurity and low birth weight.
- Promote better living conditions, such as long-term housing, safety and security.
- Reduce risks associated with maternal depression, tobacco use, drug/alcohol use, late prenatal care, and unsafe sleep environments.
- Empower residents to be an active part of the health care system.
- Improve access to health care and health insurance.

**We believe all residents should have the opportunity to make choices that allow them to have a healthy pregnancy, regardless of their income, education, or ethnic background.<sup>4</sup>**

## WHO WE SERVE

African American women who are pregnant or parenting young children living in Columbus neighborhoods with the highest rate of poor birth outcomes. We served 167 women in 2010, totaling 506 women and 329 babies since 2005.

## A PROGRAM THAT SAVES MONEY

Premature babies cost the U.S. at least \$26 billion each year. The average cost of medical care for a premature or low birth-weight baby for the first year of life is about \$49,000 vs. \$4,551 for a healthy newborn (2009)<sup>1</sup>. Among *Caring for 2* singleton births, only 34 were premature since 2005.

## WHY CARING FOR 2 IS CRITICAL

Prematurity/low birth weight is the second leading cause of infant deaths and the leading cause for African American infants (US)<sup>2</sup>. Women living in CF2 neighborhoods have a rate of low birth weight of 11.8 and a 4.6 rate of 'very low-birth weight' -- nearly 9x higher than the national goal.

## FOCUS ON DEPRESSION

*Caring for 2* mothers experience a number of adverse life events that put them at-risk for poor birth outcomes. Here's a glimpse of our mothers in 2010:

- 39.4% had bills they could not pay
- 36.5% argued often with husband or partner
- 35.6% had experienced the loss of someone close
- 31.7% had moved within the past year
- 33.7% are teen mothers
- 62% are below poverty level

It is well documented that maternal depression often goes untreated and can have devastating effects on parenting and child development<sup>3</sup>. Among *Caring For 2* mothers, one out of four are in high risk category for depression. Addressing depression is a focus for the program, which has developed an intervention model presented at national conferences and replicated by other healthy start projects.

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Given the multiple challenges facing our mothers, one would expect birth outcomes for CF2 participants to be grim. Despite such challenges, however, our outcomes are very promising...

**73.1%** of CF2 mothers started prenatal care in the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester.

**82.4%** of pregnancies were full term.

**77.8%** normal birth weight with just 2.8% very low birth weight.

**No infant deaths** among CF2 participants in 2010.

# MEET OUR MOMS



## DIEDRE, 19 YEARS OLD



Diedre enrolled in the *Caring for 2* program during her 1st trimester with her first pregnancy. “I now know the importance of good nutrition and exercise during pregnancy, I am doing everything to have a healthy baby,” said Diedre. **“It is nice to know that if**

**I need someone to talk to I can just pick up the phone and get the support that I need.”**

She currently lives at home with her parents, but she feels that she needs her own place, so *Caring for 2* is helping her to find independent housing. Breastfeeding was also something that she never would have considered, but now says it will be her choice. Diedre is pursuing a Medical Assistant Degree and was hired as a *Caring for 2* Peer Mentor.

## JERRONICA, 19 YEARS OLD



Jerronica became a *Caring for 2* participant during her second semester of her first pregnancy. She is considered to be at-risk as a teenager. Jerronica is a high school graduate, determined to pursue her nursing degree and currently

attending Columbus State Community College. She receives education on healthy eating, being active, infant care, routine health assessments and emotional support. Jerronica also receives resources for housing, clothing, and WIC. Jerronica sees *Caring for 2* staff as a **“network of support that is not judgmental, but always there to help you when you have questions”**. She was recently hired as a *Caring for 2* Peer Mentor to share her experience with other pregnant women, especially teens.

Health begins where we live, learn, work and play, and these moms have shown that. <sup>4</sup>

## TANIKKA, 36 YEARS OLD

Tanikka is a college graduate with a law degree. She enrolled in *Caring for 2* in her first trimester. Tanikka was experiencing many stressors in her life, including a recent divorce, unemployment, and being pregnant with twins. Tanikka reports **“I looked forward to home**

**visits because they always taught me something new about my pregnancy and self care.”** Starting labor at 21 weeks, the prognosis for the babies’ survival was poor. Tanikka delivered at 26 weeks, with the twins weighing just over 2lbs each. Although premature, they had no medical complications. They are now 4 years old and developing normally. Tanikka reports that with the support of *Caring for 2*, she was able to boost her self confidence, eventually passing her bar exam. She remarried in 2008, giving birth to a full-term, 8lbs 3oz baby boy in 2010. Tanikka later became a motivational speaker, presented at *Caring for 2* conferences and is a representative on the Governor’s Task Force on Infant Mortality. Tanikka is now a practicing attorney and a *Caring for 2* Peer Mentor.



## SHA'YONNA, 17 YEARS OLD

Sha'Yonna enrolled in the program during her second trimester of her first pregnancy. She faced many challenges, such as conflicts with family, unemployment, and housing. The team provides encouragement, education, and resources that help her through her pregnancy. The team is also working with her to obtain independent housing. As a pregnant teen with limited parental support, she had been uncertain of her future before the program. Sha'Yonna says **“Caring for 2 came at the right time for me because I am able to learn a lot about my pregnancy.”** Sha'Yonna was hired as a Peer Mentor, conducting neighborhood outreach. She expresses a sense of pride at earning an income which she says is, “a gateway to establishing her independence.”

