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march of dimes®

## Making a Difference in California



Click on any reference to March of Dimes to open a web page and view the video

**C**an you imagine a day when all babies are born healthy? We can.

This is what motivates us to succeed. We are passionate about getting to this day; and know we will, through the help of dedicated partners and volunteers.

Our work touches every family. March of Dimes is an invaluable resource for information about preconception care, pregnancy and baby health, placing us as one of the most recognized charities among moms in a 2007 Gallup Poll.

We are inspired by every baby. They are behind our urgent efforts to improve infant health, and why every day we:

- Fight for health insurance for all pregnant women and children
- Work to end prematurity—the leading cause of newborn death
- Provide comfort and information to families with a newborn in intensive care
- Support Nobel Prize-winning research that offers hope for prevention of and solutions for premature birth and birth defects

March of Dimes makes these efforts in the name of babies, moms and families everywhere. We are babies' staunchest advocate and Mom's greatest fan. One day every parent will know the joy of a healthy baby. Until then, there is the March of Dimes.



**T**he mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing premature birth, birth defects and infant mortality. We carry out this mission through programs of research, community services, education and advocacy.

We have been helping babies for over 70 years and continue to build on our successes.

**ALL** children today receive a polio vaccine. Development of this vaccine was funded by March of Dimes.

**EVERY** baby today has access to a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

**EVERY** newborn receives vital screening and tests as a result of our advocacy work.



**EVERY** baby born prematurely can receive surfactant or nitric oxide therapy—life-saving achievements in the treatment of premature babies—thanks in part to research funded by March of Dimes.





**Every year more than 567,000 babies are born in California, and every one of these babies benefits from the work of March of Dimes.**

### Prematurity Campaign

1 in 10 babies in California is born too soon. In 2003, the March of Dimes launched its Prematurity Campaign, making a public commitment of resources and reputation to confront preterm birth, the most serious perinatal health problem in our nation. The March of Dimes California Chapter works to prevent preterm birth and to help families have healthier babies with the following initiatives:

#### Preterm Labor Assessment Toolkit

- Developed by a multidisciplinary task force, this toolkit standardizes assessment for women who come to the hospital with signs and symptoms of preterm labor
- March of Dimes is working with hospitals in California, throughout the United States and internationally to encourage use of this important standardized tool



### Preconception Health Council of California (PHCC)

March of Dimes California Chapter and the Maternal and Child Health Division of the California Department of Public Health spearheaded the development of the PHCC—a statewide forum for planning and decision-making for the integration, development and promotion of optimal health before and between pregnancies.

### Health Education Programs

The March of Dimes offers community programs to families throughout the state to improve birth outcomes, including:

- *Healthy Babies, Healthy Futures*—a training program for volunteer health educators working with congregations in African-American churches
- *Comenzando bien*—a culturally appropriate prenatal education program for Latina women

### Research Grants

The March of Dimes research program funds scientific research aimed at preventing birth defects and infant mortality. Local scientists are working to understand life processes, such as genetics and development; clinical research applied to prevention and treatment of specific birth defects and prematurity; organic measures to halt preterm contractions, and ways to treat complications related to prematurity.



California universities and institutions are working currently on life-saving research totaling over \$14 million.

### Public Affairs

Policies and legislation that support the health of babies, mothers and their families are our highest advocacy priorities. Our current public affairs priorities include:

- Working to maintain funding for the California Birth Defects Monitoring Program
- Asking health insurance plans to provide life-saving treatment for infants born with an inborn error of metabolism
- Working on efforts to improve access to care for pregnant women, infants and children
- Advocating to maintain current funding for Maternal and Child Health programs

### March of Dimes NICU Family Support

Each year in California, tens of thousands of babies spend time in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) due to causes such as birth defects, prematurity or problems associated with delivery. The hospitalization of a baby in a NICU can be a stressful and overwhelming experience for families. March of Dimes is there to help with:

- Vital information and emotional support to families during the hospitalization of their baby in neonatal intensive care, during the transition home and in the event of a newborn's death
- Direct services to nearly 400 families a year at Miller Children's Hospital at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center. The program will soon be serving families at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center in San Jose

### Community Grants

Each year, the March of Dimes California Chapter funds local innovative programs that improve the health outcomes of mothers and babies:

- In 2008, 12 organizations across the state received grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000 to address local needs
- Four organizations across the state received funding of up to \$100,000 for multi-year preconception demonstration projects

**More information about all of our programs can be found on our website:**

**[marchofdimes.com/ca](http://marchofdimes.com/ca)**

