

# HealthVisions Update

HealthVisions Midwest, Inc.—Lake County, IN  
HealthVisions Fort Wayne—Allen County, IN  
Healthy Communities of LaPorte County, IN  
HealthVisions East St. Louis, IL

HealthVisions Midwest, Lake County, IN

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## Alcance in Atlanta

Raquel Castro and Sr. Margaret Anne Henss, PHJC attended the annual REACH U.S. Technical Assistance Workshop in Atlanta, GA. on March 9-11, 2011 They were one of four presenters at the conference highlighting the **REACH/Alcance** program in Lake County.

REACH stands for Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health. REACH grantees from across the country gathered to share their accomplishments in eliminating health disparities in their local communities. Here at HealthVisions, Raquel and her staff are working at decreasing infant mortality among Hispanic women. A key component of the program is providing medical interpretation between provider and client.

In the past year the focus of the grants has moved from purely “hands-on” to “systemic change.” HealthVisions Midwest **REACH/Alcance** program was chosen to give a poster presentation showing change in the grant focus. The poster was entitled “From Grassroots to Grass-is-Greener: Assembling the Mechanisms for Systems Change”. The poster emphasized that three intervention levels are necessary for successful, sustainable change:

- Individual Support Services-Community Health Workers (CHW) provide medical interpretation for individuals;
- Improve community practices-Partnerships expand local language access and medical interpretation;
- Advocate for systems change through policies and procedures-Submit state language access policy agenda and Medicaid reimbursement for interpreting services.



Left to right - Raquel Castro, Director of Alcance Program; Regina M. Benjamin, M.D., M.B.A. - 18th Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service; Susan Pound, Project Consultant



Many of our clients have moved from another state and as a result have problems accessing health services in Indiana. Sharon Howell a CHW at **NATALE** (one of our ministries for pregnant women in Gary) was able to help one of her clients, who desperately needed medical insurance. The client had moved from Illinois. Sharon was effective in assisting her with securing Medicaid here in Indiana, this way she was able to receive the needed health services for her and her baby.

Just another example of how our staff puts our values into action.



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Here at **Great Beginnings** the majority of our clients live in Gary, Indiana. I have found that many times we are able to find the pregnant women that would benefit from our program, but trying to stay in touch is the **BIGGEST** challenge of all!

I want to congratulate our client D.V. Among all her challenges, she was always so diligent in making sure she kept in contact with Pamela, Senior CHW and Wyvon, RN. This woman had an issue with living arrangements, she changed her phone number three times, moved twice and every time she managed to let us know her new address. That may not seem important, but communication is one of the biggest goals of our program.

D.V. stated that she was more informed on some things that she could avoid while pregnant and possibly after she delivered. She was just phenomenal because even though she had lost custody of her other children, she was so enthused to stay in compliance with all prenatal visits. We introduced the importance of breastfeeding and then gave her a referral to WIC.

Unfortunately, after delivery she wasn't able to breastfeed, due to her medications, but she was well informed and stated that she had told her pregnant friend how important it is to breastfeed. D.V. did follow up visits and her outcome included a healthy full term baby girl!

# Healthy Babies, Happy Families

Quarterly Classes on Breastfeeding /Prenatal Nutrition at **Promotores de Salud Maternal e Infantil** have been a successful tool in getting moms to come out and enjoy a nutritious lunch, watch a video on prenatal nutrition /breastfeeding, socialize with other moms, and have a chance to win prizes for mom and baby.



others, or family members to attend all educational classes.

Although the majority of our moms are Spanish speaking, we also have English speaking moms in attendance. With the help of the bilingual community health worker, Susie Jimenez, our classes have been a great success. Our breastfeeding initiation rates have increased and our low birth rates are very low. We at **Promotores** believe that by offering quarterly classes, we are empowering our clients live a healthier life.

Latwanika lived in a college town down state when she became pregnant. She dropped out of school and came back to East Chicago to live with her mom. One day while Susie Jimenez CHW was doing outreach at the Healthy East Chicago Center, she recruited Latwanika for our program.

We enrolled Latwanika in her first trimester and began prenatal education. Latwanika was a very compliant mom. She attended our breastfeeding class, safe sleep class, and our community baby shower, accompanied by her mom. On September 25, 2010 Latwanika delivered a healthy baby boy.

Prior to delivery Latwanika was successful in moving into her own apartment. The post partum visit revealed a very clean, adequate, and safe environment for the baby. Latwanika was breastfeeding and also practicing safe sleep. She is back in school at Kaplan College pursuing a certification in Medical Assistance.

She is now living in her own apartment and is back in school!

