

# CHARLESTON BERKELEY DORCHESTER COUNTIES



## Nurse-Family Partnership

*Helping First-time Parents Succeed*



### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For more information, please contact:

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One year ago, more than 140 school nurses, social workers, parents and legislators filled a large recreation hall at the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church in a resounding show of support for efforts to establish a Nurse Family Partnership program in Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester Counties. Those voices were heard.

The national office of Nurse Family Partnership approved a work plan jointly submitted by First Steps of Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester Counties along with the implementing agency, DHEC Region 7. BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation made a three-year \$1.5 million dollar grant in March 2009 to support the effort.

Nurse Family Partnership serves first time, low-income mothers with home visits from registered nurses in a highly structured program in order to achieve consistent

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outcomes: improved pregnancy outcomes, improved child health and development and improved economic self-sufficiency.

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The progress since that stakeholder meeting one year ago has been outstanding:

- The nurses have been hired and received rigorous training, both on line and for two sessions in Denver, Colorado.
- Every school district and DHEC WIC and Family Planning clinics (along with many others) in Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester Counties have collaborated in providing referrals.
- A Community Advisory Board representing bi-partisan legislative support, faith based organizations, education leadership and other community leaders - has been established.

But most importantly, first time mothers are receiving intense services that hold the promise of transforming lives. Today, fifty-nine expectant and newly delivered mothers are receiving home visits. The mothers, mostly teens, are black, white, Hispanic, Asian and American Indian. What they have in common is a willingness and desire to be the best mothers possible to provide a better future for themselves and their babies.

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“This unique partnership between Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester First Steps and DHEC Region 7 along with the support from Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of South Carolina and the collaboration of schools, hospitals, churches and clinics is actively making a difference in lives. We are delivering measureable outcomes in pre-natal care, higher birth weights, sound child development and mothers staying in school. I thank every person involved from the beginning in helping to establish this effort,” James Ella Collins, Chair, Nurse Family Partnership Community Advisory Board.

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