



## BABIES BORN HEALTHY FACT SHEET

### The Problem:

- Between 1995 and 2005, the rate of low birth weight infants (<5 ½ lbs) in the U.S. increased more than 12%.<sup>1</sup>
- Low birth weight is associated with cerebral palsy, brain damage, chronic lung and liver disease, deafness, blindness, epilepsy, learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder.<sup>2</sup>
- The social and economic costs of low birth weight infants is high:
  - \$75,000 – Average hospital charges per low birth weight/premature baby<sup>3</sup>
  - \$8 billion – Annual cost for children with any of the 17 most common birth defects or cerebral palsy<sup>4</sup>
- The African American community is disproportionately affected:
  - Low birth weight is 2x as likely for African American babies in Baltimore City<sup>5</sup>
  - Infant mortality is 3x that of white infants in Baltimore City<sup>6</sup>

### The Solution:

“This is about health, every day health. We need a paradigm shift that takes us from anticipation and management during pregnancy to health promotion and prevention before pregnancy.”<sup>7</sup>

- Healthier Women = Healthier Babies
- Preconception Care is essential:
  - Preconception care promotes the health of women of reproductive age before conception, thereby improving pregnancy-related outcomes<sup>8</sup>
  - Preconception care helps women understand and manage the impact of weight, nutrition, chronic diseases, infections and stress on themselves and their future children.

**The Planned Parenthood of Maryland Babies Born Healthy Program is a comprehensive preconception care program aimed at helping women of reproductive age live healthier lives so they can have healthier babies. This program is being piloted in the Planned Parenthood Baltimore City Health Center. Babies Born Healthy is a program fully integrated into existing women’s health services, following the CDC recommendation that preconception care should be discussed with every woman, every time.<sup>9</sup>**

*To learn more about the Planned Parenthood of Maryland Babies Born Healthy program, please contact:*

*John Nugent, President and CEO at 410-576-1400.*

<sup>1,5,6</sup> March of Dimes Peristats. [www.marchofdimes.com/Peristats](http://www.marchofdimes.com/Peristats)

<sup>2,3,4</sup> National Governors Association. Issue Brief. Improving Birth Outcomes and Reducing High Risk Births 7/8/2004.

<sup>7</sup> Atrash, H. MD Trust for America’s Health. Healthy Women, Healthy Babies. June 2008

<sup>8,9</sup> CDC MMWR April 21, 2006/Vol. 55/No. RR-6