



## House to House Program

The House to House (H2H) Program is sponsored by the *Raising Up Healthy Babies* (Infant Mortality Reduction) Taskforce of Berrien County. It was developed and implemented in 2006 because of the high infant mortality rate in Berrien County, Michigan. Statistics show that in Berrien County, African-Americans have a higher infant mortality rate than Whites. For the period of 2002-2004, out of every 1,000 African-American babies born in Berrien County, 11 of them died, and out of every 1,000 White babies born, 6 of them died. The City of Benton Harbor had the highest three-year average infant mortality rate of 11 infant deaths per 1,000 live births from 2002-2004. With this alarming data, the *Raising Up Healthy Babies* Taskforce (RUHB) decided to implement the H2H Program in an effort to decrease the infant mortality rate county-wide, and to decrease the infant mortality rate disparity between the two (2) races.

With a population of approximately 11,000 people (over 90% are African American), many families (54%) in the City of Benton Harbor are living in poverty. African-American infants born into families of low income are at exceedingly high risk for infant death, birth defects, child abuse, and many other adverse maternal and child health outcomes. Facts suggest that the major contributing causes of infant mortality in African-Americans are that many of the mothers have sexu-

ally transmitted infections (STI's), and many babies are sleeping in unsafe environments. Although we have no control over some contributing factors, educating childbearing women can make a difference. The goal of the H2H Program is to provide the Berrien County community (men and women-teens and adults) with valuable knowledge regarding healthy women, healthy pregnancies and healthy babies, ultimately decreasing infant mortality.

bed; etc.

The House to House (H2H) Gathering concept uses trained people from the community as "peer educators" (officially titled Health Promoters) to give presentations among their peers. The Health Promoters recruit a host, who in turn recruits 8-10 other people to attend the H2H Gathering. The H2H Gatherings are held primarily in

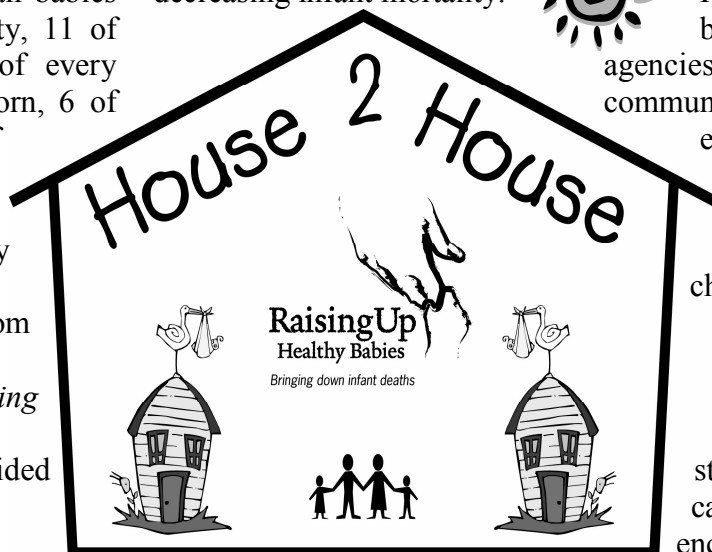


personal residences. However, they can also be held at organizations/agencies, schools, churches, community centers, hair salons, etc. The H2H

Gatherings educate the Berrien County community (especially child-bearing age African American females), and promote awareness of infant mortality facts. Recommendations of steps that each individual can take to make a difference are encouraged. Everyone will receive a variety of free incentives for attending the H2H Gatherings. Each host will receive a \$20.00 Meijer gift card to purchase refreshments for the participants, and also receive a personal "thank-you" \$20.00 Meijer gift card for hosting the Gathering. Each participant will receive a personal "thank-you" \$10.00 Meijer gift card for attending. The Benton Harbor H2H Gathering Program is one of only two that is currently operating in Southwestern Michigan.

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**To be a Host or to attend a Gathering, please contact Fatimah Mitchell at 269-927-5663.**



The H2H Program promotes awareness of infant mortality, and the importance of pre-conception health and prenatal care for females of childbearing age. Its primary messages consist of getting regular health and dental checkups; good nutrition; ample sleep; avoidance of substances that harm the body (smoking, drugs, alcohol); safe sexual behaviors; avoidance of abusive behaviors; birth control; birth spacing; STI's; breastfeeding; signs of pre-term labor; correct infant positioning (on back to sleep); avoidance of overdressing the infant; never putting a baby in bed with another person; no toys, comforters, blankets or other items in baby's

### Berrien County Health Department:

Preventing Disease, Prolonging Life and Protecting the Health of the



### Safe Homes, Safe Families - Focus of June Health

In June, the Health Department will be providing information for keeping your homes and families safe and healthy. Smoke free environments, the House-to-House program, preventive care and the Nurse Family Partnership program will be highlighted. For questions about any of these topics, please call the health department at 926-7121.

### What's the buzz all about?



Are you, or someone you know, pregnant?  
Planning on becoming pregnant?  
Have a child under the age of 2?

### Join us at a HOUSE to HOUSE GATHERING

- Friendly setting
- Knowledge on Personal Health
- WAYS TO HAVE HEALTHY BABIES

Thank-you gifts for attending include a \$10 Meijer Gift Card, and other free gifts

The Host of the Gathering will receive a \$20 Meijer Gift Card, plus other free gifts

**To be a Host, or to attend a Gathering, please contact Fatimah at 269-927-5663.**

**The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:**

Benton Harbor	M-139 Office	School Based	Niles	Three Oaks
769 Pipestone	M-139 Office	School Based	1205 N. Front St.	21 N. Elm
P.O. Box 706	2106 S. M-139	870 Colfax Ave	684-2800	756-2008
926-7121	927-5623	925-4500		

**Or visit us on the web at [www.berriencohlthdept.org](http://www.berriencohlthdept.org)**

This page is sponsored by the Berrien County Health Department

