OUR MISSION,
YOUR IMPACT
FALL 2020
Dear Friends and Supporters,

This year’s been like no other. When COVID-19 hit, schools and businesses shuttered. Life for many people ground to a halt. But those in the medical community geared up—literally, in layers of personal protective equipment—to face this deadly virus and care for their patients.

March of Dimes also jumped into action to support first responders and fight for the health of all moms and babies, which included virtualizing our critical programs and providing families with support resources to prepare for childbirth and to care for a newborn during this time.

Babies don’t stop coming, even during a pandemic. That’s why we’re doing what we know works—reaching as many moms and babies as possible. In 2020 to date, we’ve supported more than 50,000 families through our evidence-based programs. As Julie shares in her story (at right), our NICU Family Support® program is a lifeline for families as they navigate one of the hardest experiences of their lives.

Today’s serious public health threat has shown how families need us more than ever. We’ll continue to work side-by-side with the health care system, and be there for moms and babies with the advocacy, research, programs and education they need to be healthy and strong.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our vital work. We’re grateful and honored to share what your generosity has enabled us to accomplish over the last six months.

Monica Luechtefeld
Chair
March of Dimes Board of Trustees

Stacey D. Stewart
President and CEO
March of Dimes
"Our identical twins were born on February 26, 2020 via C-section at 31 weeks, after my water broke early. Aubrey was 3 pounds, 1 ounce and Lina was 4 pounds, 4 ounces.

The girls were admitted to the NICU. Going home without your babies is incredibly difficult. The hardest part was to not be able to touch, hold and feed them. To throw in another curve ball, COVID-19 had spread to our local community. The girls were in the NICU for 48 days at the height of the pandemic.

While my husband and I came to visit every day, our time with them was still limited. The amazing staff taking care of our girls made the experience more positive. And we were fortunate enough to benefit from NICU Family Support at Inova Loudoun Hospital.

Through this March of Dimes program, we were able to grasp the little normalcy we had. Everyone was incredibly knowledgeable, with tons of research to back them up, and we read lots of literature provided by the March of Dimes NICU Family Support Coordinator. We also were introduced to the My NICU Baby App, which helped us navigate our NICU journey. We felt supported and loved by those strangers who gave us care packages. We now call those strangers our March of Dimes Family.

We’re incredibly grateful for all the medical research on preterm babies. Our girls are almost six months and incredibly healthy! Aubrey is the quiet troublemaker with a contagious giggle, and Lina is our vocal singer, who performs day and night.”

JULIE PETREY
LOYAL DONOR
THE FIGHT GOES ON
Our ongoing work to reach more moms, more babies.

NICU FAMILY SUPPORT  Since 2001, March of Dimes has partnered with hospitals across the country to educate NICU staff and empower, educate and support families. We provide evidence-based programs, and online and in-person resources, for more than 50,000 families each year while their babies are in the NICU and during their transition home.

Our NICU Family Support program is celebrating its 19th birthday this year with the launch of an entirely new program model—Virtual NICU Family Support. Created in response to the pandemic, we’ll continue to provide virtual programming alongside in-person offerings this fall.

Hospital partners report high levels of program satisfaction and identify NICU Initiatives as a key part of the patient experience. With the launch of our virtual model, we aim to reach even more moms, babies and families each year.

Parent education: We provide English and Spanish versions of digital and print resources, including the My NICU Baby® and Mi Bebé en la NICU apps, and two parent booklets—“The NICU Journey” and “In the NICU for a Shorter Stay”—which are reviewed annually for medical accuracy and health literacy standards.

Provider and staff education: Hospital staff can access March of Dimes Professional Education webinars. Titles touch on topic such as the patient experience, family-centered care, quality improvement and NICU best practices. NICU Grand Rounds offer expertise on trending NICU topics, such as milk banking, NAS co-horting and religious diversity.

Improve patient and family experience: We help providers improve patient experience and family-centered care. One simple but meaningful example: NICU Family Support programs host activities, such as dinners or holiday events, to help moms and dads bond with their baby and form community on the journey home.

RESEARCH THAT MATTERS
More moms than ever are going into labor early, delivering babies who aren’t yet ready for the world. Over the last year, we’ve shifted our research efforts to focus on direct action to solve this issue. We’re refocusing to include environmental and social factors contributing to preterm labor, and finding ways to prevent and stop it.

Landmark research on the microbiome: Researchers at Imperial College London learned that a certain species, Lactobacillus crispatus, plays a beneficial role in the maternal microbiome. Clinical trials of a L. crispatus supplement are now underway, with the goal of rebalancing the microbiome to reduce inflammation and prevent preterm birth.
HEALTH EQUITY

Every mom, baby and family deserves a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible, and to be treated with respect and compassion. To achieve health equity, we’re working toward removing the obstacles—poverty, power imbalances and discrimination—to accessing high-quality health care.

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Virtualize mission program offering | Leverage 2020 election year | Address bias with training and education | Reveal new data, set new indexes | Create multi-level systemic change |

THE STATE OF OUR NATION

2.2 million women live in maternity care deserts—areas with no hospital offering obstetric services and no OB providers.

150,000 babies are born each year in maternity care deserts.

4.8 million women live in counties with limited access—few OB providers, few hospitals with obstetric services and high percentage of women without health insurance.

311,000 babies are born each year in these counties—yet less than 10 percent of obstetric providers are estimated to work in rural areas.

As of January, 2020, 120 rural health care facilities have closed.

MATERNITY CARE DESERTS REPORT

Our 2020 report describes maternity care desert status for all U.S. counties based on the most recent data from hospitals, birth centers, health care providers and health insurance—and now looks at all women of childbearing age (15-44 years old).

NEXT STEPS

Eliminate maternity care deserts.

Improve access to quality and affordable preconception, prenatal and postpartum care.

Prevent determinants of health related to social, environmental and economic disparities.

Expand research and surveillance to track maternal mortality and chronic health conditions during pregnancy and postpartum.
FURTHERING OUR IMPACT DURING COVID-19

We’ve focused on...

Providing consumer information

Expanding existing patient care and support programs

Sharing content through news and media outlets

Providing tools that engage and empower moms and families to advocate for their health and wellness

Thanks to those of you who continue to make this work possible through your ongoing support. To learn more about our COVID-19 Intervention and Support Fund visit us online at marchofdimes.org/COVID19Fund. Your support means we can address the need for research, advocacy and education to protect moms, babies and families from COVID-19.
CARING FOR THE FRONT LINE DURING A PANDEMIC

The March of Dimes network mobilized to support health care providers and families in the NICU:

- **5292+ meals** for frontline workers and NICU families
- **2133+ NICU bags** with essential supplies
- **80+ tablets** delivered to hospital partners
- **5620+ masks**
- **225 breast pumps**

EDUCATING FAMILIES BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER BIRTH

**COVID-19 birth plans**
Knowing what to ask is empowering. Having a birth plan specifically designed for giving birth during COVID-19 can reduce stress for moms and families. We created a COVID-19 focused birth plan available in sixteen different languages (link here).

**Facebook Live online education series**

- **15 virtual panels** moderated by President and CEO Stacey D. Stewart
- **33k views per event** on average
- **437k people reached** (as of 8/6/20)

ADVOCATING FOR MOMS AND BABIES

Together with partners, we advocated to:

- **Guarantee access to mental health care** for moms and strengthen Medicaid and CHIP.
- **Address inequalities** by improving data collection around COVID-19 to include demographic data.
- **Support all nonprofits** by advocating for expansion of the Paycheck Protection Program, which provides nonprofit organizations financial relief and resources under the CARES Act.
- **Prioritize the development of therapeutics and vaccines** by joining 250+ partners in sending a letter to the president requesting the nation’s participation in global collaboration to develop and distribute a COVID-19 vaccine.

**Our Chief Medical and Health Officer, Dr. Rahul Gupta, participated in two tele-briefings** to Senate and House leadership to advocate for maternal mental health and maternal health support during COVID-19.
As polio swept the nation, President Franklin D. Roosevelt challenged every American to make a donation—just a dime—to support the fight for a cure. March of Dimes was born, and less than 20 years later, we pioneered research leading to the disease’s eradication in the U.S. With polio halted, we shifted gears to focus on birth defects, preterm birth and improving the health of families. And we pioneered a new model for supporting our work: our iconic Walk-A-Thon.

We lead the fight for the health of all moms and babies, no matter who they are, where they live or what they can afford. We’re advocating for policies to protect them. We’re working to improve the health care they receive. We’re pioneering research to find solutions. We’re empowering families with programs, knowledge and tools to have healthy pregnancies. By uniting communities, we’re helping families everywhere get the support and care they need, and donors from around the world champion our work.

We imagine a world in which every baby is born healthy regardless of wealth, race or geography. We’ll mobilize millions of people in support of improving health outcomes for moms and babies. Through the research and innovative programs we fund and our targeted and tireless advocacy, we’ll reduce preterm birth and maternal mortality rates, focusing on populations and regions that need our help most. Together we’ll give every mom and baby the best possible start.

We simply could not do this incredible work without our millions of friends and supporters like you. THANK YOU.

MARCHOFDIMES.ORG