ST. MARY’S HOSPITAL & REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER PARTNERS WITH MARCH OF DIMES TO GIVE BABIES A HEALTHY START IN LIFE

Grand Junction, Colorado – St. Mary’s Hospital & Regional Medical Center is partnering with the March of Dimes to lower the number of babies born too soon.

St. Mary’s is among 100 hospitals nationwide currently working with the March of Dimes in implementing the “39+ Weeks Quality Improvement Service Package” which helps hospitals develop and implement policies and procedures to reduce medically unnecessary (elective) inductions and cesarean deliveries scheduled before 39 weeks of pregnancy.

“Every week of pregnancy is important to a baby’s health,” says Scott Berns, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President and Deputy Medical Director for the March of Dimes. “I commend St. Mary’s for being a champion for babies. Through this partnership, we will reduce the number of early elective deliveries and help give more babies a healthy start in life.”

Worldwide, 15 million babies are born too soon each year and more than one million of those infants die as a result of their early births. Babies who survive an early birth often face the risk of lifelong health challenges, such as breathing problems, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities and others. Even babies born just a few weeks early have higher rates of hospitalization and illness than full-term infants. Recent research by the March of Dimes, the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration found that although the overall threat is small, the risk of death more than doubles for infants born at 37 weeks of pregnancy when compared to babies born at 40 weeks, for all races and ethnicities.

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“We’re proud to partner with the March of Dimes to give more babies a healthy start in life,” said Geri Tamborelli, Women’s and Children’s Services director. “And, we’re proud of our expert team of physicians and nurses and the work they are doing to avoid scheduling elective inductions or caesarean deliveries before 39 weeks of pregnancy.”

The quality improvement service package is part of the March of Dimes “Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait®” campaign, which raises awareness of the importance of a full-term pregnancy and also is being backed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists through a new federal program called “Strong Start.”

The service package includes professional and consumer education materials about the importance of a full-term pregnancy and the critical development of the brain, lungs and other organs that occurs during the last weeks of pregnancy. Included in the service package are data collection tools, information on organizing grand round presentations, access to national quality improvement experts and providers, and other support services.


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The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide, the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. For the latest resources and information, visit marchofdimes.com or nacersano.org. Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

St. Mary's Hospital and Regional Medical Center, a private, not-for-profit institution, is dedicated to meeting the healthcare needs of the residents of western Colorado and eastern Utah. Founded in 1896 by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, St. Mary’s Hospital has become the largest medical center between Denver and Salt Lake City with state-of-the-art healthcare programs and services unsurpassed in the region. Approximately 2,000 staff and 475 active physicians, representing more than 40 specialties, provide the high-level and compassionate care. St. Mary's Hospital is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations, the American Medical Association Council on Medical Education, the Colorado Medical Society and the American Association of Blood Banks