

Resources for Women's Health

Lindsey E. Haynes

The Center for Women's Health Research at UNC

Founded in 2000, the nonprofit Center for Women's Health Research is part of the University of North Carolina School of Medicine and provides exemplary research services to women's health investigators in the areas of preventive care, screening, symptoms, early diagnosis, delivery of services, and health disparities. The Center's mission is exemplified through its **CORE** activities:

- *Catalyzing interdisciplinary and inter-institutional research.*
- *Outreach to the community by promoting awareness of women's health issues.*
- *Research coordinated with partners in priority areas such as preterm birth, gynecologic cancers, obesity and associated conditions, mental health, and substance abuse.*
- *Education of the next generation of women's health researchers.*

During the past year, the Center coordinated more than 20 new and continuing research proposals and projects, including studies and clinical trials examining oral health and pregnancy, infertility, preterm birth, gynecologic health, menopause, and contraception. Collaborative research efforts include an inter-institutional study by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, East Carolina University, and the Eastern North Carolina Baby Love Project on disparities in maternal health and child development in rural North Carolina; a multi-site network focused on issues in maternal/fetal medicine; and a multi-site contract to examine the pathogenesis of preeclampsia and gestational diabetes. The Center also coordinates two National Institute of Health-funded fellowships for obstetrician/gynecologists.

Increasing community awareness of women's health issues is a major part of the Center's mission. Every two years, the Center produces the North Carolina Women's Health Report Card with grades given based on improvements or declines in various indicators of women's health—chronic disease, preventive health, reproductive health, and minority health disparities. This year, three new areas of health data are available: breastfeeding, North Carolina's American Indian women, and regional data. The Report Card is distributed throughout North Carolina to health care providers, government officials, agencies, and individuals for use in targeting health disparities and health care needs of local communities.

<http://www.cwhr.unc.edu>

Eat Smart, Move More

Eat Smart, Move More consists of statewide partners dedicated to increasing opportunities for individuals to eat healthy and exercise more. Their mission is to "reverse the rising tide of obesity and chronic disease among North Carolinians by helping them eat smart, move more, and achieve a healthy weight." Their website offers a plethora of resources for families, health care professionals, advocates, and community leaders including programs and tools for eating smart and moving more, statewide plans to prevent obesity and chronic illnesses, funding opportunities for communities, recent news on nutrition and exercise, obesity facts and statistics, physical activity and nutrition data resources, individuals' success stories, guides to healthy behaviors, press-related tools and sample materials, and evidence-based practices for obesity prevention. In addition, readers can sign up for free monthly newsletters on how to eat smart and move more in the community.

<http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com>

March of Dimes

March of Dimes is a nonprofit organization dedicated to "improving the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature births, and infant mortality." Through research, community support, and education, March of Dimes carries out their mission across the nation. The national website offers vital information for both patients and providers. Women can follow a "News Moms Need" blog for moms and moms-to-be, visit the online Pregnancy and Newborn Health Education Center which offers video and audio clips on pregnancy and postpartum care, and watch interactive flash programs on understanding newborns. There is a new section that focuses on preconception health with a variety of tools and resources for couples who are considering having a baby. It also provides pregnancy tips of the day, a question and answer page, and a "Just for Dad" section. For providers, the March of Dimes website includes medical references, online modules for continuing education credits, information on research funding, awards and grants, screening tools, and free access to the Perinatal Data Center. The PeriStats website includes national, state, and local infant health data. Providers can create graphs or maps using recent data and also view quick facts or state summaries. The North Carolina chapter of the March of Dimes is linked to the national site and contains information about local activities and resources.

<http://www.marchofdimes.com>

The National Preconception Curriculum and Resource Guide for Clinicians

The Before, Between, and Beyond Pregnancy website is a resource guide for clinicians developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Select Panel on Preconceptional Care in partnership with the University of North Carolina's Center for Maternal and Infant Health and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. The site includes continuing education modules for clinicians; state resources, including links to exemplary state plans for preconception and interconception care; provider resources with descriptions and links to North Carolina prevention programs; key articles about specific high risk conditions in patients; practice support toolkits; and up-to-date news on preconception health and health care, including clinical guideline alerts, emerging public policy initiatives, and possible funding opportunities.

<http://www.beforeandbeyond.org>

National Women's Health Resource Center

Founded in 1988, the National Women's Health Resource Center (NWHRC) is a nonprofit organization committed to "providing women in-depth, objective, physician-approved information on a broad range of women's health issues." Women can search over 100 topics in NWHRC's online health library, read topic-specific columns, sign up for free e-newsletters, and download specialty booklets and handouts on healthy living. The site also includes quick links to a new mom blog, health guides, and a search for a health clinic or organization near you. NWHRC includes a "Small Steps" webpage that offers advice on "small steps to a healthier you" where women can browse topics such as diet and nutrition, fitness, managing stress, beauty, and alternative medicine. Creative tips such as skipping soda and replacing it with strawberry-mint water are just one of their easy alternatives to healthier living. On the "Health Topics A-Z" page, women can find information on topics ranging from acupuncture to cervical cancer to recommended vaccines. NWHRC also offers an up-to-date newsroom that posts the latest news in women's health.

<http://www.healthywomen.org>

North Carolina Be Smart Family Planning

Overseen by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, the Be Smart Family Planning program was created to "reduce unintended pregnancies and improve the well-being of children and families in North Carolina." The program offers free family planning and birth control services for women ages 19-55 and men ages 19-60 who are not pregnant or sterilized, have an income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, and are not currently on Medicaid. Additional services include pregnancy tests, family planning lab tests, HIV testing, Pap smears, limited screening and treatment for some STDs, and referrals to other

programs or services. Family planning services are provided at private medical clinics, local health departments, federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics, and Planned Parenthood health centers.

<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dma/medicaid/familyplanning.htm>

North Carolina Folic Acid Campaign

The North Carolina Folic Acid Campaign (NCFAC) is a statewide program that aims to reduce neural tube defects in newborns by encouraging women of reproductive age to take a daily multivitamin containing 400 mcg of folic acid. Through their educational and media campaigns, NCFAC hopes to raise awareness about the importance of folic acid consumption among the general public, health care professionals, and community organizations. On their website, NCFAC has information for women about taking multivitamins, such as which ones to choose and what the benefits are from taking them. The website also includes separate pages for women and health care providers. Women can discover tips to keep healthy for their age group, and look up information on pregnancy health and pregnancy planning. On the health care providers site, providers can find information on how to start the conversation about taking multivitamins and the importance of folic acid with their female patients. NCFAC also provides links to current recommendations for vitamin consumption and access to free patient materials and resources.

<http://www.getfolic.com>

NC Healthcare Help

NC Healthcare Help is a website developed by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine with funding from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation and the Duke Endowment's CareShare initiative. The website connects patients to free or reduced cost health care services using a database with over 300 provider locations across the state. On the website, patients can search for health care providers by location, hours of operation, insurance accepted, and services provided (such as dental, behavioral health, or specialty care). The website includes a resources page that provides links to other health care-related websites such as obtaining health insurance, adopting a healthier lifestyle, improving the community's safety net system, and accessing reports on North Carolina's safety net system and the uninsured. Patients can also view service definitions to help them better understand health care terminology. In addition to resources for patients, safety net providers can also ask questions about an organization's listing, change a listing, upload new information, and submit website suggestions.

<http://www.nchealthcarehelp.org>

NC Healthy Start Foundation

Established in 1990, the North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to reduce infant mortality and to improve the health of women and children in North Carolina. To help pursue their mission and goals, the Foundation uses various activities such as community grants, public education campaigns, materials development, training and technical assistance to other organizations, and advocacy. The Foundation also has a website that is useful for both the general public and health care professionals. For the public, the site offers information on women's health, becoming pregnant, what to do during pregnancy, caring for infants, obtaining health insurance for children, introduction to medical homes, and a link to the NC Family Health Resource Line. For professionals, the Foundation offers free educational materials for topics such as pregnancy, community education, NC Health Choice, and Spanish language materials. In addition, the site also provides links to other health programs and services in North Carolina, access to free multimedia public campaigns, and the option to sign up for a free newsletter.

<http://www.nchealthystart.org>

North Carolina Perinatal Association

With a mission of "improving perinatal health for childbearing families throughout the state," the North Carolina Perinatal Association was created in 1985. This nonprofit organization includes a coalition of physicians, nurses, social workers, and childbirth educators working together in North Carolina. The Association offers educational opportunities for providers interested in learning more about obstetrical and neonatal care in both community and hospital settings. On the Association's website, providers can view a calendar of events page and find a program or class offered in one of the Association's six geographical regions. The site also includes a resource page which provides links to various topics such as maternal health, training and certification courses, breastfeeding, and evidence-based practices. Providers interested in becoming members of this organization can find membership information directly on the website.

<http://www.ncperinatalassociation.org>

Preconception Health at EveryWomanNC

The mombaby.org website was created in 2005 by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Center for Maternal and Infant Health to improve the health of women and infants in North Carolina. The site offers a "Preconception Health" section for women interested in good health and who want to have children at some point during their lives. Women can access online health assessment tools such as the Becoming a Parent Preconception Checklist and the How Healthy Are You? interactive quiz. The site also offers statistics on the health of women in North Carolina and resources for women on issues such as healthy weight, healthy relationships, smoking cessation, access to health care services, contraception and much more. The "Take Action" section of the site has information about a variety of projects and programs underway, in North Carolina and beyond, that focus on improving the health of women.

<http://www.everywomannc.org>

Lindsey E. Haynes, is a graduate student in the Department of Health Policy and Management, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Global Public Health