



## NEWS RELEASE Mobile County Health Department

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Mobile County Health Department joins unprecedented public-private partnership to address rising U.S. infant mortality rate

### *Text messages give free health tips to pregnant women and new moms*

The Mobile County Health Department announced that it is an outreach partner of text4baby – a new free mobile information service that sends timely health information to pregnant women and new moms through a baby’s first year.

An educational program of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, text4baby delivers timely health tips via text message to those who need it most. Women who sign up for the service by texting BABY to 511411 (or BEBE for Spanish) receive three free SMS text messages each week timed to their due date or baby’s date of birth. These messages focus on a variety of topics critical to maternal and child health, including birth defects prevention, immunizations, nutrition, seasonal flu, mental health, oral health, and safe sleep. Text4baby messages also connect women to prenatal and infant care services and other resources.

Each year in the U.S., more than 500,000 babies are born prematurely and an estimated 28,000 children die before their first birthday. The infant mortality rate in the U.S. is one of the highest in the industrialized world; and for the first time since the 1950s, that rate is on the rise. Research shows that while 90 percent of Americans have a mobile phone fewer have access to the Internet, and texting is more prevalent among women of childbearing age.

“The Mobile County Health Department is proud to be a part of text4baby,” said Dr. Bert Eichold, Health Officer. “Wireless health services around the world have demonstrated the ability to help change patient behavior and improve health outcomes, and we believe that this program can have a significant impact on maternal and child health in our county.”

For years, the Mobile County Health Department has cared for the pregnant women, babies and children. Thousands of women each year are seen at the Health Department’s Women’s Center and its satellite clinics located throughout Mobile County. Additionally, high quality children’s medical services are delivered at the clinics. Finally, the Health Department’s Healthy Start project, which is the Mobile TEEN Center, has provided intensive home visitation, counseling and health education to the county’s youngest parents for over 10 years. This new texting resource will assist the Health Department as it adapts its outreach methods to the available and most utilized technologies of the day.

Text4baby is made possible through an unprecedented public-private partnership that includes founding

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corporate sponsor Johnson & Johnson, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Voxiva (the program's mobile health platform provider), CTIA-The Wireless Foundation, and Grey Healthcare Group. Other sponsors include Wellpoint, Pfizer and CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield. Implementation partners include BabyCenter, Danya International, Syniverse Technologies, Keynote Systems, and The George Washington University.



**About the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition**

The National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition is the only coalition of its kind that acts as a catalyst for change by creating partnerships among community groups, nonprofit organizations, professional associations, businesses, and government agencies. The coalition promotes optimal health for mothers and babies, and works to strengthen families and build healthy communities.