

Welcome Baby Will Welcome New Hospital Partners

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Risk screenings and early interventions for families at the time of a baby's birth can help create the stable, safe and reliable relationships between parents and their newborns that are critical to a child's optimal development and well-being. That is why the First 5 LA Commission made Family Strengthening a key strategy of its [2009-2015 Strategic Plan](#), and approved the formation of strategic partnerships with up to 24 hospitals in Los Angeles County for the *Welcome Baby* program, which includes a Universal Assessment of Newborns, during its June 14 meeting.



"First 5 LA is committed to these programs and sees this as a long-term investment for children in L.A. County," said [Dr. Jonathan Fielding](#), director of the L.A. County Department of Public Health and the First 5 LA Commission vice chair, during a June 7 luncheon introducing the program to hospital administrators, nurses and others who provide maternal services at the targeted birthing hospitals.

The Universal Assessment of Newborns strategy is intended to reach the estimated 106,500 new babies born every year in the county outside of the 14 First 5 LA [Best Start](#) communities. The Assessment is part of the *Welcome Baby* hospital visit that will be offered to families who birth at one of the partner hospitals. Including California Hospital Medical Center, which is already running a pilot *Welcome Baby* program, these hospitals serve more than half (54 percent) of the births in the county. The amount of visits and depth of the intervention will be determined by a family's place of residence.

First 5 LA Program Officer Diana Careaga said that, under *Welcome Baby*, all new mothers receive a hospital visit and are given information, support and resources available to them in the community. *Welcome Baby* also provides one-on-one visits and phone calls with a "parent coach" to discuss nutrition for mom and baby, labor and delivery, home safety for babies, breastfeeding, child development and postpartum depression.

[Deborah Daro](#), a Chapin Hall senior research fellow who focuses on evaluating child abuse treatment and prevention programs, said the plan to assess all new parents in L.A. County via *Welcome Baby* is a promising strategy for building systemic reform in the way new parents are reached. Universal assessments at birth are important because it gives all newborns an equal opportunity for support, reaches parents during a very challenging time in their lives and offers an efficient way to allocate costly, more intensive interventions, Daro said.

Daro shared the results of a similar program that is being used in Orange County. Few parents refuse assistance when it is offered and more than 90 percent have a need that is being addressed, she said. A study of a similar North Carolina program showed those who received assessments, versus those who did not, were less likely to have unnecessary emergency room visits and more likely to seek and enroll higher quality child care for their children and access more supportive services sooner.

The hospitals targeted for the strategic partnership are:

1. Antelope Valley Hospital
2. Beverly Hospital
3. Centinela Hospital Medical Center
4. Citrus Valley Medical Center-Queen of the Valley Campus
5. Garfield Medical Center
6. Good Samaritan Hospital
7. Greater El Monte Community Hospital
8. Kaiser Permanente: Baldwin Park Medical Center
9. Kaiser Permanente: Panorama City Medical Center
10. Kaiser Permanente: South Bay Medical Center

11. Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center San Pedro
12. Long Beach Memorial Medical Center
13. Memorial Hospital of Gardena
14. Monterey Park Hospital
15. Northridge Hospital Medical Center
16. Pacific Alliance Medical Center
17. Pacific Hospital of Long Beach
18. Providence Holy Cross Medical Center
19. Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center
20. St. Mary Medical Center
21. St. Francis Medical Center
22. Torrance Memorial Medical Center
23. Valley Presbyterian Hospital
24. White Memorial Medical Center