

MCHA Client Speaks Up

Latisha Simons, a single parent, is a survivor of intimate partner violence and a difficult upbringing that lasted until her late adolescent years. It is no wonder that she has suffered from depression. Enrollment in the Welcome Baby program helped turn that around. Funded by First5 LA, the Proposition 10 Commission that distributes Los Angeles County's share of some of the taxes on cigarettes, Welcome Baby is a pilot program run by MCHA and California Hospital Medical Center that is now being replicated in 13 other hospitals countywide. Latisha overcame many challenges during her participation in the program, including working with Beyond Shelter to finding stable housing, coping with depression, and finding a job.

She had a restaurant job at LAX but it ended very late at night and she would have to walk home with her children from the babysitter. Latisha would meet with her Parent Coach, i.e. MCHA staff, at a local



Jae'Lynn, King, Latisha, Kiauni (godmother) and Jazmine.

clinic because she didn't have a place of her own. She was living with family members, then later shelters and transitional housing. During all of this, she was a positive role model to her children, devoted to her children's emotional and physical health, and a firm believer in non-violent parenting. In addition to the new baby, she has twin five year-old daughters. At the last visit of the program, we were finally able to meet her in her new home. MCHA recommended Latisha speak at a gala in early November for our partner organization working to combat maternal depression, the Los Angeles County Perinatal Mental Health Task Force. The audience was visibly moved by her story and her words. Her children and their godmother accompanied her to the fundraiser, where the picture above was taken. It was a very special night for Latisha to share her story of success, assisted by Welcome Baby, with her family there in support.

MCHA NEWS AND NOTES

Oral Health Advocacy Conference: Feb. 24, 2014

MCHA, under the leadership of Monica Ochoa, Coordinator of our Oral Health Advocacy Project for Children and Pregnant Women, is leading the planning for a first-ever conference (in Los Angeles) on the oral health services currently available to low-income pregnant women, barriers to obtaining those services and what interested agencies and providers can do to help.

The conference is extremely timely given recent strong recommendations by the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists that Ob-GYNs perform routine oral health assessments at the first prenatal visit and encourage their patients to see a dentist during pregnancy. Modeled somewhat after "Consensus Conferences" in New York and Los Angeles, the conference will build on agreement that has been reached about the need for oral health care during pregnancy, help debunk myths about the ability to both receive and bill for such care, and expose issues encountered by women and providers trying to obtain care. According to experts, oral health is an important component of general health and should be maintained during pregnancy and throughout a woman's life.

For more information about the Oral Health Advocacy Project, and for additional resources, see our website or contact **Monica Ochoa, Coordinator, at Monicao@mchaccess.org (213) 749-4261 ext. 360.**

Univision for ACA

MCHA's Health Coverage Outreach Department led by Director Celia Valdez met with Univision studio producers to help shape questions for a nationally televised (in Spanish) "Obamacare Town Hall" – and then were able to invite families and staff to the Town Hall itself on December 5th. The event took place at the Mark Taper Auditorium at



Celia Valdez Director Outreach and Enrollment for health coverage, addresses the nation, broadcast on HMEU!

the (Los Angeles) Central Library and focused on issues of concern for Univision's Latino audience. Nearly 60% of uninsured Californians are Latino; thus it is critical that myths and concerns about health reform for this population are addressed.

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