



**Oscar G. and Elsa S. Mayer Family Foundation  
Interim Report (January 1, 2010-June, 30 2010)**

It is with great pleasure that I write this interim report on the progress of the NICU Family Support® program at Memorial Health University Medical Center (MUMC) in Savannah, Georgia that provides needed direct services to families whose newborn babies require hospitalization in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU.) We are grateful to be providing these services with the support of the Mayer Family Foundation.

The NICU Family Support® and the Memorial Health University Medical Center NICU have had another impressive six months. The NICU Family Support® program has achieved many successes to support families including:

- Distributed Parent Care Kits (sensitive and informative materials) to over 291 NICU Families.
- Reached 294 NICU parents through the 45 educational and supportive activities included in various Parent Hours.
- Recruited and managed graduate NICU parents and staff for the NICU Action Committee (CNAC) where high attendance and hands on involvement is consistent.
- Recruited, managed and supported 70 volunteers including hospital staff and NICU graduate parents who are readily available to provide ongoing support.
- Continued to distribute the "Welcome to Savannah" Resource Guide that is made available in the NICU waiting area for parents. This resource guide provides info about the hospital as well as information about Savannah – places to eat, shop, hotels, activities, etc.
- Provided healthy snacks and resources for mothers' who are breastfeeding.
- Completed training for two new Parent-to-Parent Support volunteers, who will share their personal experiences in the NICU with current families, listen to their needs, and offer comfort and encouragement.
- Provided books in the NICU waiting area for parents to borrow, swap, or take - books donated by NICU staff and March of Dimes volunteers.
- NICU staff and hospital staff participated in March for Babies to support the work of the March of Dimes, raising over \$8000 this year, including over \$2000 raised by the NICU staff.

The following are specific and detailed outcomes used to evaluate the progress of the program:

**The desired Outcome of NICU Family Support Program is to:**

Provide information and comfort to families during the NICU hospitalization of their newborn, during the transition home and in the event of a newborn death.

**Achieved Outcome:**

The goal was to provide 80% of NICU families with a Parent Care Kit. Through the first 6 months a total of 291 kits were distributed (287 in English and 4 in Spanish). This represents 100 per cent of NICU families receiving a Parent Care Kit, based on the average daily census.

The Parent Care Kits (items placed in March of Dimes tote bag) are offered in both Spanish and English and include the following:

- March of Dimes Congratulations Card
- March of Dimes "Keepsake Journal"
- March of Dimes "Guide & Glossary"
- March of Dimes "You & Your Baby in the NICU"
- Gram to pound conversion chart
- Scholastic Book Gift
- March of Dimes ink pen
- Hand sanitizer
- Snacks

- Magnetic Picture Frames decorated by local Brownie troop
- March of Dimes T-Shirts
- In addition, when available, a photo album, a tablet, and other small toilet items (lip balm, hand lotion, shower gel, deodorant)

**Achieved Outcome:**

The target goal of 60% was met by providing NICU families with at least one bedside visit within 72 hours of admission. This goal continues to be a challenge because many of our parents do not come to the hospital on a regular basis for various reasons, such as transportation and distance. As an incentive to bedside participation, March of Dimes is having a bi-weekly raffle for parents who have been at bedside during the previous two weeks.

**Achieved Outcome:**

A total of 44 parent activities hours (7.5 activities per month vs. the target of 3) were offered in the first six month of the year representing 294 parents. The parent hour topics include:

- Bringing Baby Home;
- 10 Important Things You Need to Know... before Taking Your Baby Home
- Car Seat Safety
- Speech & Language Development
- Infant Massage
- Scrap Booking
- Financial Information
- Lunch & Learn – Keeping your Baby Healthy When you Go Home
- Journey Beads

**Achieved Outcome:**

The NICU Family Support Specialist completed training for two new NICU graduate parent volunteers to provide bedside services to NICU families (goal was a minimum of two).

**Achieved Outcome:**

Parent satisfaction surveys are provided to families after each parent hour. Families are asked to rank the Parent Hour excellent, good, fair or poor. Of the 236 surveys returned, 87% of the parents gave a rating of excellent and 11% good. No one gave a rating of fair or poor. Families were also asked to describe their feelings about the Parent Hours. All of the comments on the surveys were positive and included:

- I learned different ways to prevent preterm birth for the future. This made me feel more comfortable for a future pregnancy.
- Very good information – made me feel more confident.
- Helpful and makes you feel not alone.
- Gave me lots of information I need to know.
- A needed help for what's to come.
- It was wonderful to be around other parents.
- I felt like the staff cared.
- I was able to relax. People knew how I was feeling.
- I like each and every one because I learn something new and I get to talk to the staff of the NICU.
- I really enjoyed it because I got to create memories for me and my baby (scrap booking)
- Got my mind off bad news for a moment.
- This was so much fun. It helps take your mind off of the challenges you and your child are facing (Journey Beads).

The second **Desired Outcome** of NICU Family Support is to contribute to NICU staff professional development.

**Achieved Outcome:**

In September of this year, the NICU Family Support Project © will provide funds for 18 NICU professional staff to attend the annual Academy of Neonatal Nursing Conference which will be held in Savannah. Satisfaction surveys will be secured from all who attend.

The philosophy of "family centered care" is the third **Desired Outcome**. Family Centered Care includes the importance of bonding, attachment, developing comfort with the infant, a stable family unit, readiness for reading, and good communication skills.

### Achieved Outcome:

A total of 294 NICU parents were served through 45 educational and supportive activities to promote family centered care. A cornerstone of NICU Family Support is the Bedside Reading Program that provides families with babies in the NICU books to read to their newborns, as well as books for siblings. Staff have received continuous training on what "family centered" care means in the NICU environment. Over the past few months, parents have been asked to comment on how they have experienced Family Centered Care during their baby's NICU experience. Comments have included:

- Classes are offered to help prepare me for what I need to do when I get home.
- I appreciate when the doctors come around and speak to the parents.
- Nurses have been very informative.
- The nurses explained how to feed the baby.
- We have been shown support from the March of Dimes staff by just being available for questions.
- I appreciate the way the staff communicates with me.
- The advice and teaching they give you helps allot.

### Collaborative Partnerships

- **Angel House Café'** –donated meals for Parent Hour and gave discounted rate for CNAC luncheon
- **NICU Staff Discharge Planner** – Worked closely with the NICU Family Support specialist to provide services for parents.
- **NICU nurses and support staff** – The Program continues to see growth, investment and involvement from the NICU nurses and other support staff. NICU staff helps in many ways, including leading Parent Hours, encouraging parents to attend Parent Hours, and alerting the NICU Family Support specialist when new families are admitted.
- **Neonatologists** – the doctors are supportive of the Project. Two of them share responsibility for leading the Lunch and Learn Parent Hours.
- **NICU Social Workers** – the two NICU social workers and the NICU Family Support Specialist partner to provide the best resources to the families in the NICU.
- **Local Girl Scout troop** – This group of girls continue to help the NICU Family Support project in various ways including, painting frames for the Parent Care Kits, preparing meals for Lunch & Learn, and assisting with March for Babies.
- **Bull Street Baptist Church WMU** – provide welcome blankets throughout the year for NICU babies and provide purple blankets during Prematurity Awareness Month (November).
- **Hospital Administration** – The new CEO of the hospital is very supportive of the March of Dimes and our mission, especially the NICU Family Support Project. Through his leadership and encouragement, the hospital raised more money this year than they have in recent past for March for Babies. He has pulled together his Senior Management Team to explore NICU Family Support Program enhancements.

### Barriers and Challenges

- There were six graduate NICU parents who volunteered last year to serve as Parent 2 Parent Support volunteers. Although they were committed to this endeavor, their family commitments and responsibilities made it difficult to complete the training in a timely fashion. Because of other commitments and responsibilities, two of these six will no longer be able to serve. Two have completed the training and two more will hopefully be able to do so in the next few months. Of the two who are trained, since they both have young children and work, it has been more difficult than they expected to find the time to support other parents. These and other graduate NICU parents continue to lead Parent Hours which does not involve the training or a long term commitment. That may prove to be the best way for families to interact with graduate parents.
- Due to parents living in rural outlying areas, seeing them at bedside within 72 hours continues to be a challenge. Many of the mothers deliver in an outlying hospital and may not be released for a few days. Parents have limited transportation to come to the hospital. Many parents have inadequate resources to be at the bedside on a regular basis. In addition, there is limited space at The Ronald McDonald house (parents of the most fragile infants are given priority).
- While our hope was to have meals for the Lunch & Learn Parent Hour lined up for the entire year, utilizing ten or twelve different resources, this has not happened. We have been able to get most of the meals donated. However, a few of them may have to be provided by the NICU Family Support Project during the second half of the year.

**Continued Action Steps:**

- Continue distribution of Parent Care Kits to 80% or more of families in the NICU
- Continue to offer a variety of Parent Hours each month
- Complete training for Parent 2 Parent volunteers by October 2010
- Continue to offer encouragement for parents to participate in their baby's care.

**Lessons Learned**

- The importance to families of the informal support they receive as well as the formal activities.
- Parents participate in Parent Hours after encouragement and as they become more confident in their surroundings.
- The Journey Beads Parent Hour has offered hidden benefits. In addition to providing parents with a fun activity, it provides a time to learn about various procedures, to support other parents, and it encourages parents to open-up, discuss and celebrate progress, regardless of how small, that their baby is making.

**Summary of Program Modules:**

**Family Empowerment**

The intention is to empower families in the NICU to participate in their baby's care; be an advocate for their newborn; and to be a member of the healthcare team.

This year's highlight: Neonatologists and NICU staff are seeing concrete evidence of the lessons the parents are learning through the NICU Family Support Project. .

**Rural/Outlying Families**

The purpose is to provide emotional and informational support for families from rural or outlying area. This year's highlight: Magazine rack purchased by NICU FSP for newly renovated NICU waiting area that is kept stocked with educational materials for families.

**Photography**

The goal is to weave photography throughout the NICU experience to provide lasting keepsakes for families. This year's highlights: Disposable cameras were provided in every Parent Care Kit.

**Budget**

Total Request Amount: received: \$30,000

Total Program Cost: \$60,000

Budget Breakdown:

	Total	Expended:
Salary	\$35,690.00	\$17,454.00
Benefits	\$13,233.60	\$4128.00
Postage	\$300.00	\$52.00
Travel and Lodging	\$850.00	\$196.00
Printing and Supplies	\$4000.00	\$2039.00
Professional Fees	\$1500.00	0
Conferences and Meetings	\$2500.00	\$0
Total	\$57,788.00	\$23,869.00

With the collaboration of Memorial Health University Medical Center and the generosity of Mayer Family Foundation, NICU Family Support® is able to provide information and comfort to NICU families, regardless of the infant's diagnosis or outcome. While NICU family Support® makes available informative and caring materials to NICU families, its service component is what makes it unique. Under the guidance of the March of Dimes NICU Family Support Specialist, volunteers, graduate NICU parents, the program is able to give much needed assistance to families experiencing stress of a NICU hospitalization. It is an honor for the March of Dimes to partner with The Mayer Family Foundation and Memorial Health University Medical Center in this innovative program. Please do not hesitate to contact Kandi Spencer, LPC, Director of Program Services at 404-350-9800 or [kspencer@marchofdimes.com](mailto:kspencer@marchofdimes.com) .