

# DHH NEWS



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## ***PARTNERS FOR HEALTHY BABIES WELCOMES THE ARRIVAL OF "THE STORK REALITY" New Marketing Campaign, Website and Digital Outreach in Place to Build Awareness***

BATON ROUGE— The stork is known for delivering babies, now Louisiana's own stork will deliver a message. The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Partners for Healthy Babies has begun *The Stork Reality* campaign. The campaign's mascot, Sammy the stork, will travel the state spreading the word about the realities of unplanned pregnancy. Sammy's mission is to promote healthy habits to ensure healthy pregnancies, and to educate men and women about the importance of being healthy before being pregnant. Since 50% of pregnancies are unplanned being prepared is critical:

- Eat right and Exercise regularly
- Take a daily multivitamin with folic acid
- No amount of tobacco or alcohol is safe in early pregnancy
- Manage stress
- Get regularly tested for STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections)

Prenatal Care, while essential, is not enough to ensure good pregnancy outcomes. This has been evidenced by the fact that Louisiana performs excellent in early and adequate prenatal care (6th nationally), but ranks among the worst states in high rates of preterm birth (PTB) and infant mortality.

"Our focus is prevention and promotion of overall health to all women before a pregnancy occurs," says Dr. Joan Wightkin, *Maternal and Child Health Program Administrator for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health*. "This is our key message - 8 or 9 months of prenatal care are not enough to address lifelong chronic disease, stress, poor access and utilization of healthcare that affects many women in Louisiana."

The campaign also has a website, [www.thestorkreality.com](http://www.thestorkreality.com), which provides key healthy pregnancy information. The website will also follow, and highlight, Sammy the stork's educational trek through Louisiana. Sammy's travels through Louisiana can also be followed on Twitter, at <http://twitter.com/SammyTheStork>

***Partners for Healthy Babies*** is funded by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health, Maternal and Child Health and WIC Programs. The program began because about 10 percent of all babies in Louisiana are born weighing less than 5.5 pounds. Our goal is to link pregnant women to the services they need to help them be healthy, and have healthy babies. **1-800-251-BABY(2229) or - [www.1800251baby.org](http://www.1800251baby.org)**

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals strives to protect and promote health statewide and to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all state citizens. To learn more about DHH, visit <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov>.

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