



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

YEAR:
2012

STATUS:
Laureate

Organization:
Children's Service Council

Organization URL:
www.cscpbc.org

Project Name:
Healthy Beginnings

What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address? What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?

Studies show that the primary success factor in most effectively serving clients and eliminating duplication of data, services, and cost expenditures, is to consider a client's full breadth of challenges and address them holistically, so positive outcomes may build upon one another. In Palm Beach County, the Children's Services Council is addressing the issue of infant mortality in a holistic way. Although the mortality rate in this area is better than the national average (7.6 v 5.9), there is an alarming statistic that 9.8 infant deaths resulted per 1,000 births in African-Americans. Even more startling, the African-American fetal mortality rate of 15.3 per 1,000 deliveries nearly doubled the national average. The percentage of premature black infants for the same period was nearly 20 percent. To alleviate the growing racial disparity of future mothers, the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County created the Healthy Beginnings program. This program targets pregnant women, babies, and families with young children, and supplies them with information on nutrition, childbirth education, breastfeeding support, home visits, parent-child bonding, screening for child development, counseling, assessing school readiness, and referrals to other services as needed. Once fully implemented, this program will dramatically reduce the gap between races and dramatically reduce infant mortality in Palm Beach County. The solution is also one that may be reused nationally to achieve similar results.

Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.

The Children's Services Council (CSC) in Palm Beach County is committed to lowering the fetal death rate as well as racial disparity and initiated the Healthy Beginnings technology project. In the first phase of work, the CSC, with the system developers CAI, built cross-agency relationships and gained awareness throughout the community towards prenatal care, maternal health, postnatal care, and positive child development. The awareness and education provide the members of the community strength in knowledge. A client information system was developed to interface with the existing systems to collect necessary data and allow for data-informed decisions. The gathered data and statistics allows for strategic management and planning decisions to be shared between the agencies and their clients. Children and families are not duplicated within the system, and data entries are not repeated due to the cross-relationships developed and sustained. The data system proves to be more efficient for the Children's Services Council and enables them to strategize and deliver families the access to services and support to attain positive outcomes. The services and support can be tracked in the data repository and allow access for easy reporting and progress reports for Palm Beach County.

Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.

Currently, Palm Beach County has drastically decreased their teen birth rate (ages 15-19), their fetal death and infant death rate, as well as decrease the number of babies born at a very low birth weight. These improved infant rates are currently better than the statewide averages. Healthy Beginnings continues their efforts and hopes to decrease the infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births to under 4.9.

Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.

The Children's Services Council in Palm Beach County is already achieving their goal for children to be born and raised healthier. "With the help of the Healthy Beginnings program, these children, as well as children in the future, have a greater chance of staying out of the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, graduate from high school, and ultimately become productive adults." - Tana Ebbole, CEO, CSC Palm Beach County.