

## **NCHD announces program to help pregnant women quit smoking**

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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For pregnant women who smoke, the Northeast Colorado Health Department would like to help them and their babies get a healthier start. The Baby and Me Tobacco Free Program is a tobacco cessation program targeting pregnant women who want to quit smoking, benefiting not only the unborn baby but improving the health of the mother as well.

Quitting smoking can be a daunting challenge and often requires support and some incentive to break the addiction to tobacco and nicotine. The BMTF program provides four one-on-one coaching sessions and incentives to support women wanting to quit smoking for up to one year postpartum.

The incentive to remain smoke-free is a \$25 voucher for diapers each month the new mom tests negative for smoking for up to 12 months postpartum.

The BMTF program was created by Laurie Adams, national project director, in 2001 in western New York. Expansion of the BMTF program into 54 counties in Colorado was funded by The Colorado Health Foundation and Rocky Mountain Health Plans Foundation beginning in 2008.

The program is intended to help pregnant women realize that quitting smoking can decrease their risk of miscarriage, help their baby's lungs grow strong, improve their baby's overall health, help ensure their baby is born on time and not early, improve their baby's birth weight and help them live longer, healthier and happier with their babies.

Pregnant women are referred by their physician, clinic or informed by news coverage or word of mouth to contact the sponsoring agency and complete an application. Each participant receives four or more sessions of cessation counseling, support and carbon monoxide monitoring, usually during their prenatal visits.

After the birth of the baby, the mother returns monthly to continue CO monitoring and if smoke-free, she receives a \$25 voucher for diapers each month for up to 12 months after delivery. The mother may choose any brand or size of diaper at Wal-Mart by using her voucher. Alternative local stores are identified for areas of Colorado in which there is no Wal-Mart.

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The program is free and participants may be any pregnant woman who lives in the northeast region and currently smokes or who was a daily smoker three months prior to becoming pregnant.

For more information on how to participate, please contact Shanna Wisdom, a community health navigator for NCHD, at 970-522-3741, ext. 1237 or 1-877-795-0646, ext. 1237.

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