



NOVEMBER 2016

# FAMILIES LIKE US

CHILDREN & THEIR DEVELOPMENT

**PREMATURITY  
AWARENESS MONTH**

*March of Dimes*  
CREATES COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIP WITH  
**MECA THERAPIES**

*Premature Birth*  
**ON THE RISE**



**Becky D. Horner**  
Executive Director,  
Southern NM and El Paso  
March of Dimes

**N**ovember is Prematurity Awareness Month and no one is working harder to find answers than the March of Dimes. Each year on November 1, the March of

Dimes releases a report card to measure progress in reducing preterm births for our country and each state. In 2016, the March of Dimes has downgraded New Mexico from a B to a C grade in the Report Card as a result of an increase in the preterm birth rate from 9.2 percent in 2014 to 9.5 percent in 2015. The U.S. preterm birth rate increased for the first time in eight years, resulting in a grade of "C" for the country as a whole.

Despite promising programs and some localized improvements, this year's report shows additional steps need to be taken in New Mexico to give more babies a healthy start to life. The issue of preterm birth has become too commonplace and too accepted across our state.

The report also revealed an underlying problem: There is an unfair burden of premature birth among racial and ethnic groups as well as geographic areas. March of Dimes ranks and tracks state progress toward the elimination of racial/ethnic disparities in preterm birth with New Mexico ranked toward the bottom at 30, down significantly from last year's ranking of 9.

While the March of Dimes strives for a world where every baby has a fair chance, this is not the reality for many mothers and babies in New Mexico. For example, among the counties in New Mexico where the most babies are born, rates range from 7.8 percent in San Juan County to 10.2 percent in Lea County. Among black women in New Mexico, the preterm birth rate is 42 percent higher than the rate among all other women in the state.

The March of Dimes supports eight interventions that when implemented in the most challenged communities can help reduce the preterm birth rate. Prevention opportunities are strengthened through programs such as The Coming of the Blessing and Becoming a Mom/Comenzando Bien in New Mexico that provide prenatal education for Native American and Latina women through home visits and group education. This approach helps to reach underserved and often rural communities by taking resources to them. Partnering with organizations like MECA Therapies, LLC will also help bring awareness and resources to rural and underserved communities in our state.

With broader awareness and implementation of programs like these in New Mexico, we can achieve March of Dimes' goal to lower the preterm birth rate to 8.1 by 2020. America leads the world in medical research and care, yet the U.S. preterm birth rate still ranks among the worst of high resource nations. This is unacceptable, but fixable. Our immediate actions will help give all babies a better tomorrow.

Visit [marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org) where you can explore prematurity and disparity in your own county; sign up to raise awareness on World Prematurity Day on Nov. 17, and support programs and groundbreaking research attacking the causes of prematurity.

**"OUR IMMEDIATE ACTIONS WILL HELP GIVE ALL BABIES A BETTER TOMORROW."**

– *Becky D. Horner*



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### A Publication for the Families of New Mexico

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#### EARLY INTERVENTION WORKS!

Early intervention education and services prevent babies from having to be admitted into NICUs due to premature birth.

# NOVEMBER IS THE MARCH OF DIMES PREMATURITY AWARENESS MONTH®



## LEARN MORE ABOUT RAISING AWARENESS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**P**rematurity Awareness Month® is in November, and when March of Dimes and its more than 50 international partners turns the world's attention to the serious problem of premature birth.

Premature birth (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) is the **No. 1 killer of babies**, and the leading cause of death of children under age 5 around the world. In the United States, about 380,000 babies are born too soon each year – that's 1 in 10. The premature birth rate in our country is higher than most other high-resource nations.

Babies who survive an early birth may face serious and lifelong health problems; including breathing problems, jaundice, vision loss, cerebral palsy and intellectual delays.

There are so many challenges for these babies and their families from day one that tomorrow is a dream.

The March of Dimes has launched Give

them tomorrow, a universal call to do something today to help moms and to save babies, while raising awareness about the fight against premature birth.

Here's how YOU can help this November and on World Prematurity Day (WPD):

**SHOUT OUT:** Share your baby's first milestones at #babysfirst with our social community;

**REACH OUT:** Send message of hope to a family with a baby in the hospital newborn intensive care unit (NICU), and we'll hand-deliver it;

**HELP OUT:** Engage/raise awareness during Prematurity Awareness Month and/or on World Prematurity Day on November 17.

• **Go Purple!** Wear purple and/or light your home and/or office building in support of Prematurity Awareness Month and World Prematurity Day. Share the best and brightest ways you're going purple in social media with the following official hashtags: **#givethemtomorrow** and

### #worldprematurityday.

- Add your voice and sign-up to automatically post a message of support and awareness of prematurity through your social media community on WPD.
- Change your profile picture by adding a WPD profile picture on Facebook and Twitter, helping to raise awareness without saying a word.
- Share the March of Dimes national social media posts throughout the month (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), including the Premature Birth Report Card press release on Nov. 1.
- Attend/support Prematurity Awareness Month events in your area – contact your local market office for more information.

SOURCE: the March of Dimes

march of dimes®

# March of Dimes

## RELEASES NATIONAL 2016 PREMATURE BIRTH REPORT CARD



**A** national report card by the March of Dimes, an organization that works to end premature birth, shows the increase in preterm birth rates across the United States.

The report card coincides with the March of Dimes Prematurity Campaign's mission to

reduce premature births across the country.

"The 2016 March of Dimes Report Card demonstrates that there is an unfair burden of premature birth among specific racial and ethnic groups as well as geographic areas," said Jennifer L. Howse, president of the March of Dimes. "The March of Dimes strives for a world where every baby

has a fair chance, yet we see this is not the reality for many mothers and babies. Babies in this country have different chances of surviving and thriving simply based on the circumstances of their birth."

The U.S. preterm birth rate increased from 9.57 to 9.63 in 2015, according to March of Dimes.





MECA  
Therapies LLC

Community Partnership  
with march of dimes

**P**remature birth is the number one cause of death among babies, and because of this nationwide dilemma, the March of Dimes made it its goal to end it.

The March of Dimes is a leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health for more than 75 years. The organization works to prevent premature birth, birth defects and infant mortality.

“Americans lead the world in medical research and care, yet the U.S. preterm birth rate still ranks near the bottom of high-resource nations,” said Edward R.B. McCabe, March of Dimes Chief Medical Officer. “We can do better by mobilizing resources and driving best practices and policies to ensure that no mother or baby falls through the cracks.”

The March of Dimes makes community connections to bring awareness, resources, and advocacy to our communities.

Recently, **MECA Therapies**, an organization that offers early intervention therapy services for children in New Mexico, partnered with the March of Dimes.

The partnership makes **MECA Therapies** the only March of Dimes Early Intervention Community Partner in the state of New Mexico and will benefit families who have

babies in neonatal intensive care units (NICU).

With the March of Dimes partnership, **MECA Therapies** is licensed as a NICU Family Support provider that allows **MECA Therapies** to increase the reach of their quality resources to reduce the neonatal issues, that will affect child development, from occurring in New Mexico.

*March of Dimes:*  
**MAKING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS TO END PREMATURE BIRTH**

According to the March of Dimes, in New Mexico, 507 babies are born each week; the probabilities of premature birth, birth defect, and infant mortality are set against these babies even before they enter this world.

Babies affected by unhealthy neonatal and perinatal factors depend on NICUs, and organizations such as the March of Dimes who strive to prevent babies from having to be admitted into a NICU.

**MECA Therapies** will provide NICU Family Support Program resources, and other March of Dimes educational information throughout southern New Mexico.

The NICU Family Support Program services will aim to assist families while they are in the NICU and from their transition in the NICU to their homes.

As a NICU Family Support Partner, **MECA Therapies** will continue to aid families after their transition from NICU with ongoing services that will help the child in their rehabilitation and their future development.

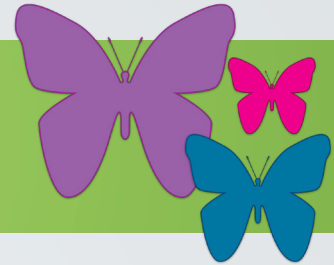
Overall, **MECA Therapies** and the March of Dimes wish to achieve maximum community health by:

- Providing early intervention education and services to prevent babies from having to be admitted into NICUs in the first place.
- Assisting families that need to admit their baby in a NICU. The organizations will provide vital information and services, while patients are in a NICU, during their transition home, and providing any services that will be beneficial to the baby for maximum rehabilitation after they are transitioned home.
- Serving families with quality services and credible information that will positively impact the family for the rest of their lives.

**For more information visit**  
**mecatherapies.com and**  
**marchofdimes.org.**

# Communities **BENEFIT** FROM ONGOING EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

## How community partnership & early intervention will benefit NM



**C**hildren, who are born prematurely (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities.

Premature born babies are admitted into NICUs for specialized care. This is where the NICU Family Support Team between March of Dimes and MECA Therapies comes into play.

The community partnership between the March of Dimes and MECA Therapies makes MECA Therapies the only Early Childhood Program licensed as a NICU Family support provider in the state of New Mexico licensed by the March of Dimes.

Because MECA Therapies provides Family Infant Toddler Services in six counties across New Mexico, the organization is equipped to aid March of Dimes by educating families in those areas.

MECA Therapies created the special NICU Family Support Team because of this community partnership and their ability to get March of Dimes resources out to families.

Together MECA therapies and March of Dimes will work towards improving the health of babies in rural New Mexico by

- providing prenatal resources to families
- providing families with options for receiving early intervention services

- providing therapeutic support to babies
- and to assist the March of Dimes in their ongoing effort to prevent birth defects, premature and infant mortality.

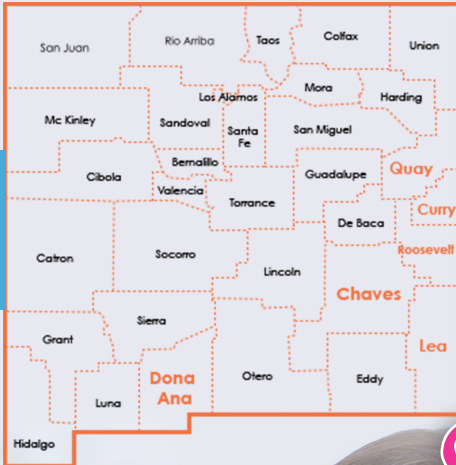
MECA Therapies will assist families to access March of Dimes NICU resources online from any device with an internet connection and through MECA's website link

MECA Therapies NICU Family Support team will work diligently with NICU staff and the family to ensure that there is a seamless transition for the family from the NICU setting to their home.





Therapies LLC



MECA Therapies provides Family Infant Toddler Services in six counties across New Mexico.

Moving EVERY CHILD AHEAD!



CALL TODAY! (575) 522-9500

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