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Contact: Kathy Barton  
713-794-9998  
Porfirio Villarreal  
713-794-9021

### **HDHHS receives March of Dimes grant to improve health of Houston mothers, babies**

The Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) is proud to be a recipient of a grant from the March of Dimes' Texas Chapter to support its Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutritional program. The \$34,400 grant seeks to increase the number of pregnant women in Houston who enroll in WIC early in their pregnancies.

The March of Dimes, through a review of state and local health statistics and service gaps identified an unmet need in Houston. By providing incentives such as grocery store gift certificates and bus tokens for those who rely on public transportation to visit a WIC clinic, this need will begin to be addressed.

“By using the March of Dimes community grant as seed money, we anticipate being able to help our mothers and babies receive nutrition education and vouchers for nutritious foods,” said Judy Fraley, WIC’s breast-feeding coordinator. “We are grateful to all those who support the March of Dimes and work to improve the maternal and infant health in Houston.”

HDHHS provided WIC services to a record 82,417 people in 2004. WIC provides nutrition education and vouchers for nutritious foods to pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, women who have given birth in the last six months and children up to age five who have nutrition health-related problems. Its goal is to reduce premature births, low birth weigh, the fetal death rate and long-term medical expenses.

For more information about enrolling in WIC, call 713-794-9090.

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The March of Dimes is a national voluntary health agency whose mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality. Founded in 1938, the March of Dimes funds programs of research, community services, education, and advocacy to save babies. More information is available on the March of Dimes web sites at [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com) and [www.nacersano.org](http://www.nacersano.org).

Standards for participation in WIC are the same for everyone regardless of sex, age, handicap, race, creed and national origin. People who feel that they have been discriminated against, can call 1-800-942-3678.

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