

Welcome Baby offers hospital and home-based services for pregnant women and the mothers who have just given birth. The main goal of Welcome Baby is to work with families to enhance the parent-child relationship and maximize the health, safety and security of the baby, while linking families to community resources and additional supportive services as needed. The program is currently offered at 14 hospitals in LA County, and is offered at no cost to all mothers giving birth, or planning to give birth, at a participating hospital. Families will benefit in different ways based on where they live and their specific needs.

Welcome Baby was developed and piloted by Maternal and Child Health Access and California Hospital Medical Center in 2009. The pilot demonstrated significant improvements in maternal postpartum care, along with increased rates of exclusive breastfeeding and on-time child immunizations.

Outcomes based on the Welcome Baby pilot:

- **Increased breastfeeding and improved nutrition**
 - Increased initiation, duration, and exclusivity of breastfeeding
 - Improved parent knowledge of nutrition, healthy habits and activities for mom and baby
- **Appropriate health and developmental care**
 - Higher immunization rates
 - Higher rates of insurance coverage
 - Increased number of mothers screened for postpartum depression
 - Increased numbers of parents administering quality developmental screens
- **Improved connections with community services and support resources**
 - Increased referrals & use of existing resources for moms with unmet basic needs
 - Help with problems related to substance abuse, domestic violence, and social isolation
 - Treatment for postpartum depression
 - Recognize risk factors for developmental delays

At full implementation, approximately 25 percent of mothers giving birth in LA County will have received a Welcome Baby hospital visit & assessment, providing an opportunity for all families to receive important education & resources to help them start strong and stay healthy.

Welcome Baby Timeline of Program Visits

 **FIRST OR SECOND TRIMESTER OF PREGNANCY**
Visit in the home

 **PHONE CALL CHECK-IN**

 **THIRD TRIMESTER OF PREGNANCY**
Visit in the home

 **BABY IS BORN**
Postpartum hospital visit

 **NURSE HOME VISIT WITHIN ONE WEEK OF MOM AND BABY COMING HOME**

 **BABY'S 2-4 WEEKS**
Visit in the home

 **BABY'S 2 MONTHS**
Visit in the home

 **BABY'S 3-4 MONTHS**
Visit in the home

 **BABY'S 9 MONTHS**
Final visit in the home

All appointments are held with a personal parent coach or nurse who offers women support and education every step of the way.

A 2014 study of Welcome Baby by UCLA and the Urban Institute reported favorable outcomes in a variety of areas:

Home Environment

- On average, mothers who participated in Welcome Baby demonstrated higher levels of support for their child in the home than mothers who did not participate in Welcome Baby.
- Overall, Welcome Baby mothers showed higher ratings than mothers not participating in the program for positive interactions with their children and greater variety in home activities (e.g., eating meals as a family and reading to their babies at least three times a week).
- Participating mothers had more learning materials in the home than mothers who did not participate in Welcome Baby. Researchers associated this with higher quality home environments and more sensitive parenting.
- Participating in Welcome Baby was associated with increased home learning activities.
- Mothers who participated in Welcome Baby engaged their babies in learning activities more frequently than mothers who did not participate in Welcome Baby.

Breastfeeding

- Mothers who participated in Welcome Baby were almost twice as likely to exclusively breastfeed during the first four months as mothers who did not participate in the program.

Immunizations

- Mothers participating in Welcome Baby were 8 times more likely to have gotten all required immunizations for their children than those who did not participate in the program.
- Mothers who remained in the Welcome Baby program for its entire duration were 9 times more likely to have gotten on-time immunizations for their baby than mothers who only received a partial portion of the program (the hospital visit and up to 3 postpartum visits).

Health and Child Care Services

- Families who participated in Welcome Baby were more likely to use regulated child care than were families in the community who did not participate in the program.
- Researchers say their findings suggest that Welcome Baby participants are better connected to health and child care services than are non-participants.

Client Satisfaction

- Researchers surveyed mothers a year after they had participated in the Welcome Baby program and found that the vast majority were very satisfied with the services they had received. The mothers reported very good to excellent relationships with their Welcome Baby parent coaches and nurses and said they would definitely recommend the program to friends and relatives.
- The majority of mothers reported that their parent coaches were knowledgeable and that they had learned a lot from them.
- In general, Welcome Baby participants were very satisfied with the home visits they received, but a number of families expressed needing more intensive and comprehensive services.

Community Benefits

- Welcome Baby in-home visits are a strong and highly valued service in the community, providing families with much needed support and resources.
- The program is well-designed, adaptable, and highly valued by mothers of newborns.
- Home visiting has been, and continues to be, fine-tuned and strengthened to better meet the needs of high-risk mothers, infants and families.

LA Best Babies Network (LABBN), which is a community benefit of Dignity Health - California Hospital Medical Center, administers Welcome Baby for the First 5 LA Family Strengthening Oversight Entity grant. LABBN provides all the training and support for the implementation of the Welcome Baby and Select Home Visiting programs, ensuring quality and fidelity to the model.

How Welcome Baby Benefits Hospitals

Community programs benefit both the hospital and the community members it serves. The Welcome Baby program creates positive public relations for the hospital, increases delivery rates, reduces rates of ER readmission related to perinatal care, and improves Joint Commission ratings.

Hospital Public Relations

Welcome Baby demonstrates a hospital's commitment to improving health and wellness in the community, a key point of any hospital mission statement. Welcome Baby increases public awareness of the hospital and fortifies its reputation as a trusted and caring community partner.

Delivery Rates

Hospitals that offer the Welcome Baby program attract more expecting mothers to deliver there. The hospital will be known for its excellent prenatal and postpartum care, which not only serves its mission but also bolsters its bottom line.

Perinatal Readmission ER Visits

Welcome Baby's role in educating patients about perinatal health reduces ER readmission rates and overall costs to the hospital. Pregnant women who are enrolled in Welcome Baby can consult with nurses, parent coaches, and other trained and certified staff. Having a knowledgeable person to contact during pregnancy not only provides relief for the mother, but also lessens the strain on a hospital's ER department.

Joint Commission rating

With the expansion of the Joint Commission Perinatal Care measure, hospitals are rated on standards, one of which includes exclusive breastfeeding. Hospitals offering Welcome Baby benefit from a high rating in this measure, as the program educates families on the benefits of breastfeeding and provides support from Certified Lactation Educators. A higher Joint Commission rating lends prestige and recognition to a hospital and enhances the community's confidence in its quality of care and service.