

January 2010 E-Update A periodic publication on the progress of the Salt Lake County Children's Study.

THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S STUDY IS MAKING PROGRESS IN THE FIELD

Since the National Children's Study began enrolling participants in late April 2009, we have made a lot of progress in enrollment, participant follow-up and data collection.

We currently have over 100 participants enrolled in the National Children's Study, and 17 babies have been born so far. We have conducted 65 home visits with women in their 1st and 3rd trimesters and 15 home visits with fathers. The 1st trimester home visit lasts approximately 3 hours and includes questionnaires, physical measures like height & weight, biologic sample collection, like blood & urine, and environmental sample collection, like dust & water from the home. Participants are compensated with \$100 at the completion of this home visit for their time and effort. We have received very positive feedback from Study participants on the professionalism and sensitivity of the NCS staff members who are conducting the home visits. Staff members spent numerous hours preparing for these visits so that they would run smoothly and efficiently.



Pictured Left;
Environmental Monitoring Specialist, Ben Dunbar, collects a floor wipe sample.



Pictured Right;
Visit Coordinator, Brennan Loyola and Environmental Monitoring Specialist, Lori Miles, practice for TI data collection.

"Both my wife and I suffer from chronic childhood illnesses. When asked to be a part of The National Children's Study, we were delighted. Our hopes are that through this study and modern medicine, our family and future generations will have cures and medical advancements in their youth to help them live long, live well and live free of chronic illness."

-Participant Quote

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE NCS BIRTH TEAM

The Utah Vanguard Center (VC) Birth Team consists of four certified staff members: Elaine Taggart, RN, Birth Visit Coordinator, and three Research Assistant/Umbilical Cord Phlebotomists – Renee Ubico, Suzanne Stradling, and Kerri Pitcher. Each member undergoes specialized training to collect birth samples and corresponding data at every Birth Visit for participating mothers enrolled in the Utah VC National Children's Study. These members rotate a 24/7 on-call schedule to cover birth visits at all nine hospitals in the Salt Lake County. Two staff members are on-call every day; one assigned coverage of the north end and the other, the south end of the county.

A typical day usually starts with Elaine at either a Coordinating Center meeting or catching up on emails followed by a quick inventory of supplies and forms needed for the team for the next delivery. Each day a transmission is completed via the NCS Tablet laptop to either send completed assignments to NCS Operations or receive new ones. A good part of each day is spent making sure all documents from previous deliveries are accurately filled out, entered into the tablet for transmission (as needed) and any missing data collected from the participant's hospital records. On-going training of VC Field staff and hospital staff education are also a regular part of the team's routine.

Prior to a participant's delivery, Elaine sends a letter to her delivery physician explaining the study and what the team will need to collect at the delivery. Additionally, one of the team travels to that mother's delivery hospital to "flag" her prenatal record - meant to alert the L&D staff that she is an NCS participant. When she is eventually admitted to L&D, the staff or family pages the Birth Team and off we go! Some days we're paged during working hours and will follow the progress of "our" laboring mother through updates with her L&D nurse until she is closer to delivery and then we head to the hospital. Other times, we may get very little notice that one of our study moms is about to deliver – either because she is experiencing a very fast labor or perhaps needs a c/section. In these situations, the birth team must be ready to drop and run on a moment's notice. Yea, neither sleet nor hail nor potential speeding ticket will keep us from our appointed rounds!

At the actual delivery we collect the B1 samples: maternal blood, cord blood (collected while the placenta is still *in utero*) and the placenta and cord. These are then transported by the team back to the study center lab for immediate storage/shipment. One or two days later, the team returns to conduct the B2 visit before our Mom and Baby are discharged. Meconium samples and heel-stick blood spot cards are collected by hospital staff from our new "participant". The Birth Team then completes a short interview and check out procedure with Mom and anthropometric measurements & facial photographs of Baby. Lastly, information from the hospital record is obtained for maternal and neonatal chart abstractions. Abstractions are often worked on while waiting for a participant to deliver.

No two days are alike, which makes the work we do very interesting and yes...sometimes crazy. We wouldn't have it any other way!

CHILDREN'S STUDY CHAMPION-ELAINE TAGGART, RN-BIRTH TEAM COORDINATOR

Elaine began her nursing career in 1973 when she graduated from Weber State University in Ogden, Utah. That same year she married Gregg Taggart, her husband of 36 yrs. Together, they have raised six children and now enjoy great fun with their 9 (soon to be 10) grandchildren! When Elaine likes something, she stays with it - as evidenced by her 18 year career working Labor & Delivery and another 18 years as a Research Nurse. She loves the variety and challenge that have come with research, as well as the natural balance of clinical detail, patient interaction and community involvement it has provided.. As expected, the National Children's Study has been a perfect fit! When not working, she pursues her love of singing (she sang in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir for 10 years), is planning next year's garden, and sincerely hopes to read more.



For more information contact our Community Relations Director, Pamela Silberman.

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