



New Project to Help Moms Have Healthy Babies

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Tucson, AZ- Tucson Postpartum Depression Coalition (TPDC) is excited to announce the expansion of its health promotion project in the Tucson community through a generous grant from the March of Dimes. *Operation Educate Tucson* will focus on improving the health of mothers and babies by raising awareness about anxiety and depression before and during pregnancy. This education project will help doctors and other practitioners incorporate screening and referrals for mental health issues as a part of prenatal and pre-conception care. It also aims to educate women so they are informed of reproductive risk factors that might produce a negative outcome, and can become advocates for themselves during pregnancy.

In the greater Tucson area 15% of all babies born are born too early or weighing too little. With this project, TPDC and local prenatal care providers can help mothers get the care and information they need to have the healthiest possible pregnancy. For nine years TPDC has been serving the Tucson community as a link to information and services for both families and professionals. About 20% of women will face depression or anxiety around childbirth. Both anxiety and depression are common and treatable, and if families find the support they need it can dramatically improve health outcomes.

Operation Educate Tucson will also address anxiety and depression even before women become pregnant. Women who report having mental health issues prior to pregnancy are 40% more likely to have complications in their pregnancy. TPDC's *Operation Educate Tucson* helps support March of Dimes mission in helping moms have full-term pregnancies and healthy babies. "We are so thankful that March of Dimes is helping us address the issue of mental health during pregnancy and prior to conception. This project wouldn't be possible without their assistance," says TPDC president Carole Sheehan. "By reducing stigma, raising awareness, and improving access to services this partnership will improve the health of Tucson families".

About March of Dimes

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. For more than 75 years, moms and babies have benefited from March of Dimes research, education, vaccines, and breakthroughs. Find out how you can help raise funds to prevent premature birth and birth defects by walking in March for Babies at marchforbabies.org. Find us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#). The 2014 March for Babies is sponsored nationally by the March of Dimes number one corporate supporter Kmart, Macy's, Famous Footwear, Cigna, Sanofi Pasteur, Mission Pharmacal, United Airlines and Actavis.