



Banner Health  
**McKee**  
Medical Center

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# *Healthy Beginnings*

## **Early care for healthy moms and babies**

It's a simple fact. Women who have proper prenatal care give birth to healthier babies. But for women who have low incomes, or who are underinsured or uninsured, receiving these prenatal services can be difficult, especially if they appear too costly.

As a result, a high number of women in Larimer County are at risk for delivering low birth weight babies. These babies often suffer from physical, emotional and developmental problems throughout their lives.

To reach these women, the Healthy Beginnings program opened in 1991. McKee Medical Center, in cooperation with community agencies, obtained funding through private and public services, and fund raisers to establish this program and help ensure early and adequate prenatal, delivery, support and educational services for low income families.

## **Our Program:**

- Assists in finding early prenatal care for low income, underinsured and uninsured clients.
- Finds financial resources for midwife/physician and hospital costs of pregnancy and birth.
- Locates resources for other personal and family needs.
- Provides education and support during pregnancy, childbirth and parenting, for moms and dads.

## **Our Caregivers:**

Women receive the care they need through a variety of health care providers including:

- Private doctors or certified nurse-midwives
- Financial counselors
- Public Health nurses
- Medical social workers/Care Coordinators
- Childbirth instructors
- Registered Dietitian

## **The dangers of low birth weight**

Low birth weight — less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces — is the largest contributor to infant mortality and illness and accounts for 10 percent of all health care costs among children. These newborns are also at risk for a number of physical and emotional challenges throughout their lives including:

- Increased risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and non-insulin dependent diabetes upon reaching adulthood
- Higher likelihood of experiencing health and developmental problems
- Lower performance on psychological and developmental assessments
- Higher incidence of neurological impairments and chronic health conditions
- Frequent utilization of special education services
- Delayed entrance into kindergarten
- Increased likelihood to repeat a grade in school

## **Invest in tiny lives today**

Prenatal care is still unattainable for many women. Currently, 81 percent of the families in the Healthy Beginnings program are working uninsured. It is vital to continue reaching out to these families for the health of their babies and the health of our



community. Investing in these tiny lives now can help ensure that they have healthy tomorrows, physically and emotionally.

### **Making a difference**

Since 1991, Healthy Beginnings has had a significant impact on improving the health of newborns in southern Larimer County.

The program has:

- Assisted more than 5,000 families with prenatal care, delivery services, education, support and referral services.
- Improved the first trimester prenatal care among low-income women from less than 20 percent in 1991 to 63 percent in 2007.

- Consistently decreased the incidence of low birth weight babies among low-income women, compared to state averages.
- Connected families with other community resources and agencies for a continuation of care throughout their lives.

**Please visit [www.bannerhealth.com](http://www.bannerhealth.com), Keyword: McKee Healthy Beginnings for more information.**

*"I was really happy with the financial and emotional help I received from Healthy Beginnings. The program helped guide me through my pregnancy."*

- Kendra