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BMS FAMILY HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTERS WIC PROGRAM RECEIVES USDA GOLD BREASTFEEDING AWARD OF EXCELLENCE



Pictured: BMS WIC Staff

BMS Family Health and Wellness Centers is pleased to announce that its Women, Infants and Children (BMS WIC) program received the prestigious **USDA Gold Breastfeeding Award of Excellence 2024** for providing exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support to WIC families. The BMS WIC team previously received the award in 2015. BMS WIC is a federally funded, state-run program focused on the nutritional wellbeing of low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum individuals, infants, and children up to the age of five. Our WIC program provides participant-centered tailored food packages, nutrition counseling, breastfeeding/chestfeeding promotion and support, and social service referrals to eligible families in communities we serve.

BMS WIC also services as a gateway to the healthcare services provided by BMS Family Health and Wellness Centers, which include primary and specialty care, prenatal and postpartum care, pediatrics, infectious disease, dental care, behavioral health services, treatment for substance use disorders, as well as care management. BMS is a vital link between families and many social and health resources, childcare assistance programs, wellness programs, food assistance programs and other entitlement programs.

Low birth weight among newborns is an ongoing challenge in the communities we serve, and WIC programs have significantly contributed to the reduction in the rates of low birth weight and to improved weight gain and growth among at-risk infants. “Our BMS WIC program not only helps babies by promoting breastfeeding and providing nutrition education, but also helps families access our clinical health services, which is important for maternal and children’s health,” says **Dr. Camille Taylor-Mullins, BMS Chief Medical Officer.**

To achieve successful breastfeeding outcomes, BMS WIC offers comprehensive lactation services by highly skilled professional and paraprofessional staff, including an international board-certified lactation consultant, certified lactation counselors, registered dietitians and certified dietitians/nutritionists. Our program includes the BMS Lactation Room, a public drop-in space available to the community, along with a team of trained breastfeeding peer counselors who reflect the language and culture of the community and offer essential support to breastfeeding families. BMS WIC also promotes the normalization of breastfeeding within the community.

“Our BMS WIC program has consistently excelled in promoting and supporting breastfeeding within our community, largely due to our well-established breastfeeding peer counselor program and the effective implementation of breastfeeding policies and procedures,” says **Linda Joseph, BMS WIC Director.** “We are pleased with the efforts of Roxanne English, Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), our dedicated Breastfeeding Coordinator, and to the entire WIC team for their unwavering commitment to supporting our breastfeeding participants.”

About BMS Family Health and Wellness Centers

Brownsville Community Development Center (BCDC) was incorporated in 1974 as a nonprofit corporation. BCDC established the BMS Family Health and Wellness Centers (BMS) in 1982, which now encompasses five clinical and four nonclinical locations. BMS provides an array of primary care, specialty services and wellness programs that address and prevent health conditions and empowers our community through education, coordination and advocacy. BMS’ mission is to provide and promote integrative and high-quality health care and social services to enable everyone in our communities to achieve Total Health and Wellness. For more information, please visit www.bmsfhc.org.