



A Newsletter Published by Community Health of South Florida, Inc.

EMPOWERING MOTHERS AND STRENGTHENING FAMILIES THROUGH SUPPORT



Jovanni Farrington Ruffin (center) is all smiles as she receives groceries for her family.

Becoming a mother can be one of life's happiest moments. It is a time for deep bonding, nurturing, and growth. However, it also comes with significant learning curves, as new mothers adjust to meeting their child's needs while caring for themselves. Access to proper neonatal education is crucial, especially for those facing financial struggles or lacking family support.

Recognizing this need, Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI) partnered with March of Dimes to host a special event to provide essential resources like education, groceries, and baby care items with help from several other local South Florida organizations. "The target population for this event was pregnant and post-partum mothers, and families with young

children,” said Vice President for Planning and Government Affairs, Peter Wood. “There are a lot of families in Miami-Dade County that are struggling to make ends meet. We made sure that they had nutritious food to take home.”

The event was designed as an interactive shopping experience, allowing attendees to choose the groceries they needed, fresh items like eggs and fruit, rather than receiving pre-packaged bags. This thoughtful approach, Wood explained, made sure that families left with food they would genuinely enjoy. In addition to groceries, mothers received children’s books and essential newborn sleep sacks to promote safe sleep practices.

Nearly 200 invited guests not only collected supplies but gained invaluable knowledge from fellow parents and educators on raising happy, healthy children. Volunteer and foster parent, Denise Farrington, described the impact as life-changing.

“I was there to help and to touch mothers across the board,” she said. “Families are not connected like they used to be so they might not know how to put a meal together. Things like making mashed potatoes and carrots are a great treat for your child. These young mothers need people to share that information with them.”

Farrington urged the importance of events that go beyond just providing resources.

“We need events that connect people, not only information but connect mothers to their homes and communities,” she said. “There are a lot of women going through motherhood by themselves and it is not easy.”

CHI is committed to doing just that. Through initiatives like this, CHI aims to ease the challenges of motherhood and ensure that no family must navigate this journey alone.



Guests were treated to a shopping experience stocked with fresh produce and milk.

President & CEO Message

Prioritizing your health is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and your loved ones. At Community Health of South Florida, Inc. (CHI), we remain committed to ensuring that high-quality, accessible healthcare is available to everyone in our community in 2025. Now is a great time to schedule your annual checkups and screenings, because taking care of yourself today leads to a healthier future.

We are starting the year with exciting news! The Key Largo Health Center is nearing completion and will soon open its doors. This new, state-of-the-art facility will replace the Tavernier Health Center, offering the same great services such as Family Medicine and Pediatrics. With its larger space and modern design, the Key Largo Health Center will allow us to reach even more people in Monroe County, continuing our mission to make healthcare accessible to all. This will continue to strengthen our presence in the lower, middle, and upper Keys. In the interim, the care team will continue to see patients at our Marathon Health Center and Everglades Health Center.

Another milestone is fast approaching! On March 31st, we will celebrate a major step forward for our children's mental health services with our Beam Signing Event for the Children's Crisis Center. We have come a long way in turning this vision into reality, the first-ever crisis stabilization unit in southern Miami-Dade County dedicated to children suffering from severe mental illness. This center will be a game-changer for our community, offering critical care to those who need it most. Donors, community supporters, and staff will gather to sign the beams



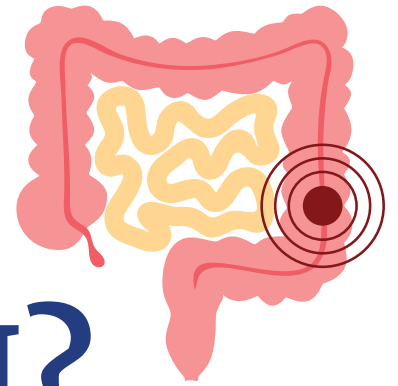
and write their place in history and the hearts and minds of our youth.

As we look ahead, it's also a crucial time to advocate for community health centers. CHI, along with 1,400 other health centers across the nation, provides essential services to more than 30 million underserved individuals. Right now, these services are at risk. Without continued federal funding, access to affordable medications, primary care, and life-saving treatments could be jeopardized. This funding keeps our sites running, lowers healthcare costs, and ensures that care reaches those who need it most. So, stay informed and please stay tuned for upcoming opportunities to advocate for community health centers.

Thank you for being a valued part of the CHI family!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Blake Hall".

Blake Hall

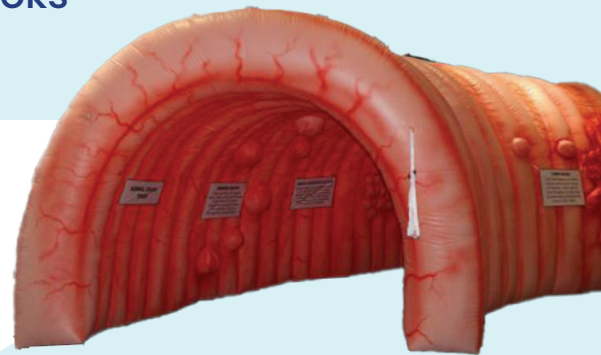


HAVE YOU EVER WALKED INSIDE A GIANT COLON?

Join CHI doctors for a stroll inside an interactive inflatable colon display to see what colorectal cancer looks like and what you can do to prevent it.



Then get your **FREE** colorectal screening at CHI!*



WHEN: Tuesday, March 4, 2025
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

WHERE: Doris Ison Health Center
10300 SW 216th Street
Miami, FL 33190

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in the U.S. for both men and women.
Don't become a statistic! Come and learn more!

For more information visit:
chisouthfl.org/colorectalcancer
or call: 786-272-2100

*While supplies last

FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION: CHI Highlights the Importance of Heart Health



Michelle Punsamie (left) and Dr. Mithun Mathew (right) are all smiles at the Doris Ison Health Center.

After giving birth to her son, Jasmine Matthews struggled with the demands of caring for a newborn child and a growing family. As stress mounted, she noticed that her eating habits began to suffer.

“Ever since I had my son, I have been struggling with my blood pressure,” she said. “Stress adds to it for sure.”

Matthews is among nearly half of the U.S. adults suffering from hypertension, a condition linked to factors such as high sodium intake, obesity, and lack of awareness about heart health.

In recognition of American Heart Association Wear Red Day, CHI took a stand in raising awareness about cardiovascular health. The event at the Doris Ison Health Center provided free education, as well as glucose and blood pressure screenings, giving patients an opportunity to check in on their health and take proactive steps toward wellness.

With high blood pressure as a leading cause of heart disease, CHI physician Dr. Mithun Mathew emphasized the importance of prevention.

“The goal is to share the importance of exercising and dieting,” Dr. Mathew said. “Making it simple for them to take action.” Dr. Mathew also stressed that some

people may be more preconditioned than others to develop diabetes due to their genetics, urging individuals with a family history of the disease to be particularly mindful of their health.

“Preventing these issues from happening is better than fixing and treating these conditions,” Dr. Mathews urged. “Starting small and being consistent with what works for you is key.”

Jasmine Matthews is thankful for the opportunity to check in on her vitals and the chance to speak with a CHI physician one-on-one.

“Today confirmed for me that I need to work on what I eat,” she said. “I want to be here for my family in the future and take care of them.”

CHI is now offering cardiology services, providing patients with access to specialized care. Those interested are encouraged to speak with their provider for more information.



CHI Outreach staff, Rocio Vivas (left) gives patient a digital blood pressure unit.

Our Compassionate Team Serving You

Dr. Glenn Cooreman, DO at Marathon Health Center, and Jacquell Brewton, Patient Financial Services Specialist for dental services at our West Perrine Health Center, share their favorite parts about working at CHI. Click the links below to learn more.



Jacquell Brewton, PFSS

[CLICK HERE](#)



Dr. Glenn Cooreman, DO

[CLICK HERE](#)