

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (HMHB), Maricopa County, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving birth outcomes through the utilization of community based prevention and intervention programs. HMHB enhances the quality of prenatal and infant care education by increasing the accessibility of health information to professionals and members of the community through its network of state and local HMHB coalitions. HMHB works to connect diverse organizations ranging from community groups to government agencies in order to strengthen communities through the promotion of positive health outcomes for mothers and babies.

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies, Maricopa County, was formed in response to the consistent findings by the Maricopa County Department of Public Health that not only were infant mortality rates in the lower-income South and West Phoenix regions of Maricopa County disproportionately higher, but also that a third of those infant deaths could have been prevented through routine prenatal and newborn health checkups.

Moved by the high levels of infant mortality, in Maricopa County, community leaders, including the current President of HMHB, Maricopa County, Martha Garcia, took on the task of hiring and training “community mobilizers” to educate women and families in the community about the importance of prenatal care in producing positive birth outcomes. But as the founding members of HMHB thought about this notion of hiring “community mobilizers” to combat the unacceptably high rates of preventable infant mortality, they realized this model was similar to the *Promotora* model that had been widely and effectively used in many of Mexico’s border cities. The *Promotora* model was typically employed to address health disparities in lower-income communities and relied on the work of natural leaders from within the community to educate their neighbors and peers about positive health practices. Thus, rather than posting job advertisements and hosting scores of interviews to find “community mobilizers”, the local HMHB recruited *Promotoras*, women who were already leaders within the community, to jump start the efforts to provide more effective prenatal care in Maricopa County. Since then, the *Promotora* model has not only boosted the energy and enthusiasm in HMHB’s efforts, but has also instilled a deep commitment and sense of urgency in their work towards building a healthier community.

Through the support of HMHB, the *Promotoras* continue to make an important impact on their community and inspire others to make a difference as well through their energizing passion and unwavering dedication to the health of mothers and children in their community.

