



The SC Birth Defects Program

The SC Birth Defects Act (Title 44-44-10) allows DHEC to address birth defects prevention, research, and referrals through the SC Birth Defects Program.

This is important because:

- In 2019, birth defects were the #1 cause of infant mortality in SC.
- Babies born with a birth defect are more likely to face physical, academic, and social challenges than babies born without a birth defect.
- Many of these children need Early Intervention (BabyNet) services or surgeries within the first few years of life.

Kid Spotlight Mila Troy



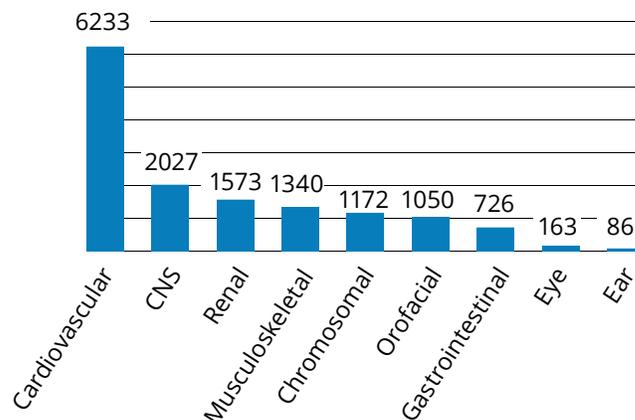
Kindergartener, Big Sister, Lover of Life and Gummi Bears

"Mila was born with Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome (HLHS). Three open heart surgeries later, she is a fun loving, kind, smart, six-year-old Miracle, who reminds us of the gift

of life, the importance of being present and daily gratitude. Throughout Mila's heart journey, our family has experienced many difficult moments during her surgeries and recovery periods. We have been her biggest advocates for health and human services and are grateful for the medical professionals who continue to provide her much needed, intensive care. Through God's Grace and the advances of modern medicine, we continue to beat the odds one day at a time."

- Submitted by Maya Troy, Mila's Mom

SC Birth Defects by Organ Group (2008-2019)



Surveillance of Birth Defects

The SCBDP reviews thousands of medical charts each year to identify cases of birth defects. The program uses guidelines from the National Birth Defects Prevention Network. To learn more, visit www.NBDPN.org

- From 2008-2019 SCBDP identified 14,370 cases of birth defects.
- For infants born in 2019, SCBDP gathered information on 3,034 possible cases of birth defects.
 - » 1,124 were confirmed to be cases of birth defects that are monitored by the program.
- Many children have more than one birth defect. In 2019, SCBDP identified 762 unique children who have at least one birth defect

Referrals to Services for Families Impacted by Birth Defects

The South Carolina Birth Defects Act allows SCBDP to refer families to services. In 2019, SCBDP began a pilot project to refer all infants identified with a birth defect who are 2.5 years and younger, to BabyNet. Visit <https://msp.scdhhs.gov/babynet/> to learn more.

- During a pilot referrals project in 2019, over 1500 children were referred to BabyNet by SCBDP.
- Nearly one third of all children referred became eligible for services for the first time due to the SCBDP referral.
- Including the pilot project, nearly 2000 children have been referred to BabyNet since 2019.

Prevention of Birth Defects

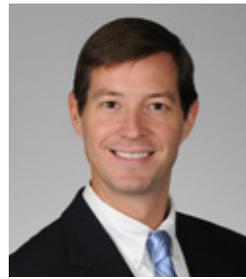
Since fall 2019, the SCBDP has given away nearly 8,000 bottles of prenatal vitamins to community partners to share with women. Getting enough **follic acid** is one of the easiest ways to prevent neural tube defects.



Not all birth defects can be prevented. There are things families can do to help improve the chances of a healthy baby: Exercising, not smoking or vaping, eating a diet full of fruits and vegetables, avoiding drugs, and getting regular medical care during pregnancy. SCBDP partners with Greenwood Genetic Center to help families impacted by neural tube defects. Visit <https://www.ggc.org/birth-defects-preventionprogram> to learn more.

Congenital Heart Defects Surveillance

- Heart defects are the most common type of birth defect.
- South Carolina is one of six sites across the US participating in a CDC congenital heart defects surveillance project.
- SCBDP is partnering with MUSC, GGC, Prisma Health, and Revenue and Fiscal Affairs to identify heart defects cases.



“It’s an honor and privilege to be working with our colleagues across the state and country to better understand the survival, healthcare use, and longer term outcomes of individuals born with congenital heart defects across the lifespan.

Understanding health issues and needs at all ages is vital to improving the lives of individuals with these conditions.”

-Dr. Eric Graham, MUSC

SCBDP Vision

A South Carolina where healthy births are promoted, every birth defect counts, and families impacted by birth defects are supported.

SCBDP Mission

To collect comprehensive birth defects surveillance data in order 1) to understand the frequency, types, and impact of birth defects in South Carolina, 2) to develop strategies to prevent birth defects, 3) to facilitate birth defects research, and 4) to refer families impacted by birth defects to helpful services.

Questions? Comments?

Please contact:

SCBDP@dhec.sc.gov with questions