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Healthy Start Coalition Director Honored as “Pinellas Healthcare Pioneer”



Judi Vitucci, PhD, executive director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Pinellas, was named the *Community Healthcare Pioneer* by the Pinellas County Health Department. The initiative originates out of the State of Florida’s Office of Minority Health (OMH). Dr. Vitucci joins other winners in each of Florida’s 67 counties who were nominated by their peers and selected to receive the honor.

The Healthy Start Coalition of Pinellas, Inc. is one of 31 such groups throughout the state. It is a community based, private, non-profit organization focused on improving the health and well being of pregnant women, their children and families.

Healthy Start services are provided through the Pinellas County Health Department. These include care coordination, home visiting services, breastfeeding education and support, childbirth education, parenting support, smoking cessation and nutritional care.

The award’s criteria included being affiliated with at least one community or faith-based, non-profit organization within the past 10 years and having had a positive impact on the community’s health in one of the seven areas where there are disparities among minorities in Florida. (These areas are HIV/AIDS, cancer, infant mortality, cardiovascular disease, oral health, immunizations and diabetes.)

Dr. Vitucci has been active in the early childhood and medical communities in the county for more than 20 years. She has been the executive director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Pinellas since 2005, but she has worked and taught in the Tampa Bay area since 1984. She is also the chair of the Pinellas KidCare Coalition, which helps to give uninsured children gain access to health insurance and health care. Dr. Vitucci has a doctorate in applied medical anthropology from the University of South Florida and is a pediatric nurse practitioner.

For information about the Health Start Coalition of Pinellas, go to www.healthystartpinellas.org.
For information about the Pinellas County Health Department, go to www.PinellasHealth.com.

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