

# Infant Health Program recertified | The Dowagiac News

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NILES — Cassopolis Family Clinic's Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP), part of its obstetrics and gynecology clinic in Niles, was recertified in January by the Michigan Department of Community Health for 18 months, through June 2012.

"(MIHP) provides services for at-risk pregnant women and infants up to their first birthday," says Michelle Schau, MSW, program coordinator.

"For the patients we're privileged to serve, 'at risk' may mean they have limited or no financial resources to access the basic goods and services they need. To be eligible, patients must qualify for Michigan Medicaid.

"Although the program is completely voluntary, many women who choose CFC for prenatal care, choose to seek services of the (MIHP). Many patients lack adequate family support, whether emotional, physical or financial. We tailor our services around the needs of our patients. Education, case management and parenting classes are free of cost for our patients," Schau said.

There are three disciplines involved in MIHP services.

Social workers provide case management. Registered nurses provide patient education, including what to expect during pregnancy, delivery and after birth. Dietitians provide guidance on eating well during pregnancy and following birth and education and proper nutrition for infants.

"This program really makes a difference in the quality of our patients' lives," says Mary Middleton, executive director. "Every time we deliver a healthy baby, it's a success."

Brezy Davidson, a 21-year-old mother of two, has sought medical and MIHP services at Cassopolis Family Clinic twice.

She has a 17-month-old and a newborn. "My sister-in-law told me about the services available. She came here," she said.

Brezy said she's benefited from not only the education, but from the incentive gifts earned by attending baby care basics classes offered by the MIHP staff.

"We earned a car seat for both babies, which really helps since money is so tight," Brezy said.

Baby care basics classes teach parents how to care for newborns, including feeding, bathing and handling.

"I didn't have much help for my first baby, as I've been on my own since I was 16. I have more help this time and I know more what to expect. When you're young, having your first baby, you don't know what to expect. Having access to a program like this really helps. Both pregnancies were more successful because I didn't have to figure everything out by myself. The nurses even came to my home, which was helpful, because transportation has been a problem."

Cassopolis Family Clinic provided obstetrical care to 859 patients in 2010.

MIHP saw 1,008 patients for maternal and infant services.

For more information, contact CFC at (269) 683-0300 (obstetrics) or 683-6859 (MIHP). CFC is accepting new patients.

