



THE COMING OF THE BLESSING® **The March of Dimes West Region American Indian/Alaska Native Initiative**

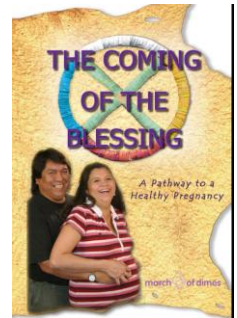
Pilot Project Evaluation Results – 2008 to 2010



The American Indian/Alaska Native Women's Committee of the March of Dimes West Region created a comprehensive perinatal health education booklet called *The Coming of the Blessing®* to honor the native cultural beliefs and traditions that impact pregnancy and child-bearing. The booklet was pilot tested in 14 states beginning in 2008 with feedback collected from healthcare providers and families.

Here is what we learned from the women who received the booklet:

- 181 women from 40 nations in 10 states responded;
- 88% of the women were between the ages of 18 and 35;
- 13 preterm births (including 1 twin birth) were reported;
- **The preterm birth rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives is 14.6% but for women participating in *The Coming of the Blessing®*, that rate has been reduced to 7%;**
- 88% kept all of their prenatal appointments;
- 76% of the women received prenatal care in the 1st trimester;
- **The rate of early prenatal care for American Indians and Alaska Natives is 66% but for women participating in *The Coming of the Blessing®*, that rate has been increased to 76%.**
- 88% found the information on ancestral wisdom helpful;
- 78% found the information on traditional beliefs helpful;
- **90% of the women said the booklet helped them change a behavior to be healthier during pregnancy. Women most frequently reported changes in eating/exercise habits, stress reduction, decision to breastfeed, multi-vitamin use and smoking/drug use.**



Some comments written by the women include:

- "Helpful information for my life."
- "Made me think of teaching my children my heritage."
- "In every word and sentence, the booklet is helpful."
- "Values my traditional heritage."
- "Makes me proud to be a part of my culture."
- "Helped me stay true to my beliefs."
- "Family is most of all important for support."
- "Let's you know about our ancestors."
- "Great information for Natives by Natives."

Because of the overwhelming positive response, the booklet is now available in every state through the March of Dimes Fulfillment Center.