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Tuesday, September 19, 2000  
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## ***Baby Your Baby Grows Up and Improves with Age***

(Salt Lake City, UT) - Baby Your Baby is celebrating its 13<sup>th</sup> birthday along with several program successes. As most teenagers know, the telephone is key to communication and now that Baby Your Baby is a teenager, it has answered nearly 200,000 hotline calls to 1-800-826-9662. Today the program expects to answer its 200,000 hotline call and the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is honored to have the call answered by First Lady Jacalyn Leavitt, honorary Chair of the Baby Your Baby Campaign.

When Baby Your Baby (BYB) was born in 1988, the UDOH intended it to be a two-year prenatal outreach and media campaign; 13 years later it's still going strong. The program's goal was to educate and encourage all pregnant women to seek early and repeated prenatal care in an effort to reduce Utah's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR). To accomplish this lofty goal, the Department joined forces with Michelle King and KUTV 2 News and created a strong public-private partnership. The 1987 legislature also appropriated \$1.7 million toward this goal based on the 1985 IMR, which was 9.8 deaths per 1,000 births.

After three years of BYB, Utah's IMR dropped to 7.4 deaths per 1,000. Because of the overwhelming success of the prenatal phase, the campaign was continued for another two years with an emphasis on infant and toddler care. The success of the program continued, centering on nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood, eye health, well-child exams and financial assistance. The program distributed 250,000 BYB Keepsake Books and hundreds of thousands of newsletters. Results were immediate and the IMR started on a downward spiral.

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Possibly the best BYB birthday present is the dramatic reduction in Utah's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR). The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) today announced that Utah's 1999 Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has dropped to an all-time low of 4.8 deaths per 1,000 births. This is the first time in Utah history that the rate has fallen below 5.0. This rate brings Utah the title of the fifth lowest IMR (provisional 1999 data) in the United States.

In more recent years BYB has concentrated on the Back To Sleep message to reduce the risk of Sudden Infants Death Syndrome (SIDS), folic acid before pregnancy to prevent birth defects, childhood immunizations and injury prevention. In the years to come the website, [www.babyyourbaby.org](http://www.babyyourbaby.org), should allow the UDOH to provide additional and more targeted information.

As BYB ages it does so with numerous achievements. A Dan Jones Survey showed that 92 percent of all Utah households had heard of BYB. In 1995, the Coalition for Utah Families presented BYB with the Governor's Award. The program was also awarded the prestigious Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies National Achievement Award for the best-sustained public information program in America in 1991. In 1989, it was also awarded best public information campaign from the National Association of Governor's Association.

Over the years many sponsors emerged to support better health for babies. Intermountain Health Care, Willard L. Eccles Charitable Foundation, FM 100, Utah Medical Association, March of Dimes and Smith's Foods and Drug have provided nearly \$10 million in cash and other in-kind services. In addition, the support from the health care community providing excellent care for these women and infants has helped BYB grow into a program that is now a teenager, one that the UDOH is proud to have raised.