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**United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Mayor Tom Barrett
Announce New Partnership to Fight Infant Mortality Crisis
*\$200,000 United Way grant kicks off multi-year initiative***

(July 27, 2011 – Milwaukee, WI) United Way of Greater Milwaukee joined with Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett today to announce their new partnership to help combat the city's infant mortality crisis. Using the very successful partnership to prevent teen pregnancy, launched in 2008, as a model, United Way and the City of Milwaukee will build a community-wide coalition with stakeholders from across the public, private and non-profit sector.

To kick off the partnership, United Way announced an initial grant of \$200,000 to the City of Milwaukee to improve birth outcomes in a targeted geographic area with the worst birth outcomes in the city: 53206, 53210, and 53216. Evidence-based activities funded through the grant will include direct family services, as well as advocacy efforts and education.

"Our City is plagued by high rates of infant mortality and other poor birth outcomes, especially in minority populations," said Mayor Barrett. "It is unacceptable to me and it should be to everyone. We've made so much progress on teen pregnancy prevention together with United Way. I'm excited about our partnership to bring that kind progress to improving birth outcomes in Milwaukee. With this grant, we can hit the ground running and continue to do what we know will work."

The City of Milwaukee is expected to use the grant to hire an additional public health nurse and a social worker in the intensive home visiting program, "Empowering Families of Milwaukee," to recruit and offer services to at-risk pregnant women in the target zip codes. This program has proven successful. Of the 449 babies born to families being served by the program since it began in 2006, 6.6% were preterm, around half the rate of all births within the target zip codes.

Funds will also be used to increase access to medications proven to reduce preterm births by as much as 45% among certain very high risk pregnant women.

Working with local Medicaid HMOs and healthcare providers to broaden access to drugs such as 17P and progesterone gel for eligible women across the city will also have a positive effect on birth outcomes.

In addition to being the 7th worst city for infant mortality among the 53 largest cities in the United States, according to the 2007 Big Cities Health Inventory, Milwaukee also has the highest gap in black-to-white infant deaths. In 2009, there were 122 infant deaths in the City of Milwaukee. Many of these deaths were preventable.

“Infant mortality is a critical indicator of the overall health of a community. Babies are dying in Milwaukee and we have the ability to fund efforts to save lives now,” said Mary Lou Young, president and CEO of United Way of Greater Milwaukee. “Today we will begin funding efforts led by the City of Milwaukee and continue our long-term efforts to reduce infant deaths through additional program funding and raising awareness about the issue.”

United Way will make the grant as part of its 2011-2012 funding cycle, which begins this month.

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About United Way of Greater Milwaukee

United Way of Greater Milwaukee advances the common good by creating opportunities for a better life for all. Our focus is on education, income and health – the building blocks for a good quality of life. Learn more about our community-changing strategies and goals at:

<http://www.unitedwaymilwaukee.org/Newsroom.htm>

Join us. Advocate for change at:

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