



**March  
of Dimes®**  
*Saving babies, together®*

# Baby Cap Program

The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects and reducing infant mortality. The Illinois Chapter of the March of Dimes has developed many educational programs designed to lead us closer to achieving our mission.

One of those prevention efforts developed by the Illinois Chapter is the Baby Caps Program. This program was created to increase awareness of the March of Dimes endeavors while providing newborns with needed warmth. Over 300 volunteers throughout Illinois make this program a success.

Unfortunately not all babies are born healthy and equipped to survive without interventions. A number of infants born may be placed in a Neonatal Infant Care Unit (NICU) to provide them with the special care they need. Many of these infants' difficulties resulted from being born at low birth weight or being born premature.

Regardless of the baby's condition, maintenance of a neutral thermal environment is

essential to the care of the infant. Prevention of heat loss is often best achieved by simple methods applied with common sense.

This can be achieved by either warming the environment or covering the baby. <sup>1)</sup>



Therefore, the Baby Caps Program was developed in late 1995. Volunteers contribute their time and skills to knit and crochet small infant caps to be distributed to area hospitals. To date, over 15,000 caps have been given to hospitals in the Illinois area. During a special celebration, hospitals are awarded the caps to distribute to newborns cared for at their NICU.

1) Neonatal - Perinatal Medicine: Diseases of the Fetus and Infant. Avery A. Fanaroff, M.B., F.R.C.P., Richard J. Martin, M.B., F.R.A.C.P., Volume One, Mossy, 1997

### ***When a baby cries***

***It is a newborn cry for life...***

***A cry that fills the moment of birth. Parents and families, doctors and nurses hope that it is a healthy one. But, today, that is not always so.***

***Too many babies are born premature or with birth defects that could disable or kill them.***

***The March of Dimes wants every baby's first cry to be fiercely healthy. We won't stop fighting until all babies have the chance for a healthy start in life.***



The answers can't come soon enough.™

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