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For immediate release

Children's Mercy partners with the March of Dimes in leading the charge to improve the health of babies throughout the region

Partnership includes the inaugural 2011 Nurse of the Year Awards Gala and March for Babies 2012 campaign

Kansas City, Mo – May 10, 2011 – Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics and the March of Dimes today announced a multi-platform partnership to improve the health of babies throughout the region. The partnership will include leadership of the March of Dimes' March for Babies and Nurse of the Year Awards Gala, and the appointment of a Children's Mercy leader as a new member of the Greater Kansas Chapter of the March of Dimes Board of Directors.

Karen Cox, RN, PhD, FAAN, Executive Vice President and Co-Chief Operating Officer of [Children's Mercy](http://ChildrensMercy.org), is leading the partnership as event chair of the 2011 and 2013 Nurse of the Year Awards Gala and the 2012 March for Babies campaign. "Like the March of Dimes, Children's Mercy works tirelessly to improve the health and wellbeing of babies through quality care, research and strategic partnerships. That makes this a perfect partnership around a single mission – healthy babies," says Dr. Cox.

Felisha Mason McDougald will serve as the honorary chair of the Nurse of the Year Awards Gala. Ms. McDougald supports the mission of the March of Dimes in part because of her appreciation for the work her father, Roy, did as a NICU nurse for most of his life. Ms. McDougald is the founder, chairman and CEO of Mason Development, a multimillion-dollar development company; a partner at Midwest Professional Insurance Services; a finalist of NBC's hit reality television show, "*The Apprentice*," with Donald Trump; and will lend her expertise as an entrepreneur, speaker, and community servant to the March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Awards Gala.

Premature birth is the leading cause of newborn death and many lifelong disabilities. March for Babies, the March of Dimes' largest fundraiser, helps fund lifesaving research and educational programs aimed at helping moms have healthy babies. This year, the Kansas City event had nearly 8,000 walkers who continue to work on reaching the chapter's \$1 million goal to help improve the health of the area's babies.

Children's Mercy is committed to the highest level of medical care for the region's children - from birth through adolescence – through research, cutting-edge technology, and innovative programs like our new Fetal Health Center that provides prenatal services, delivery and pediatric subspecialty care for high-risk babies.

"We have had a long-standing relationship with the March of Dimes through research and shared resources. Now we lend our support to next year's March for Babies walk to raise awareness and funds throughout our community to provide for babies who are born premature or with birth defects," said Dr. Cox.

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"Best of all, our partnership doesn't stop with the walk. As a nurse, and especially during National Nurses Week, I am delighted to be the inaugural chair of the March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Awards Gala on October 28, 2011 to honor the dedication and commitment of the Kansas City nursing community." This biennial event will recognize the contributions of local nurses throughout the area.

In addition to Children's Mercy's leadership of these two signature programs, the March of Dimes selected Cheri Hunt, RN, MHA, NEA-BC, Vice President for Nursing and Chief Nursing Officer of Children's Mercy as a new member of the Greater Kansas Chapter of the March of Dimes Board of Directors. As a board member, Cheri will also serve as Chair of the State Program Services Committee to develop the chapter's annual program plan and direct the plan to strategically invest the chapter's financial resources for the greatest impact.

To learn how you can help more babies be born healthy, visit marchofdimes.com.

"It was really important to have Children's Mercy on board to partner with us at a local level," said Ken Jackson, State Director for the Greater Kansas March of Dimes Chapter. "Their passion for the cause and commitment to the health of all babies will be a driving factor in the success of our events and programs in the future. We are grateful for the time and support they continue to lend us."

About the March of Dimes

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide and its premier event, March for Babies the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. For the latest resources and information, visit marchofdimes.com or nacersano.org. Find us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

About Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics

Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, located in Kansas City, Mo., is one of the nation's top pediatric medical centers. The 314-bed hospital provides care for children from birth through the age of 18, and has been recognized by the American Nurses Credentialing Center with Magnet designation for excellence in nursing services, and ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of "America's Best Children's Hospitals." Its faculty of 600 pediatricians and researchers across more than 40 subspecialties are actively involved in clinical care, pediatric research, and educating the next generation of pediatric subspecialists. For more information about Children's Mercy and its research, visit childrensmercy.org or download our mobile phone app *CMH4YOU* for all phone types. For breaking news and videos, follow us on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#).