



## Local midwife honored at Heroes in the Field event

COLUMBIA -- The March of Dimes South Carolina Chapter, in collaboration with Palmetto Healthy Start and Select Health of South Carolina Inc., held the second annual Heroes in the Field event Sept. 18 at the South Carolina Hospital Association in Columbia. Patricia Smith, a certified nurse midwife at The Regional Medical Center, was one of the honorees.

Heroes in the Field honorees are recognized for their significant contributions to reducing the incidence of infant mortality in South Carolina. The infant mortality rate in South Carolina is 9.0 per 1,000 live births, higher than the United States rate of 6.9. South Carolina has the fourth-highest rates of infant mortality compared to all states in the nation.

"The leading cause of infant mortality in the nation and in our state is due to the numerous consequences of prematurity," said Dr. Bryan Ohning, medical director of the NICU, Children's Hospital, Greenville Hospital System University Medical Center. "While we need to continue to focus on advancements in neonatal care, we also need to prioritize research on the cause of premature birth and discover how to reduce its incidence."

Smith began her nursing career in labor and delivery in Orangeburg in 1978. Four years later, she joined the health department and began working as a public health nurse in maternity and family planning. In 1985, she became a certified nurse midwife and returned to the health department to provide prenatal care.

In 1990, Smith joined the practice of Drs. Williamson and Gillespie. She continues to provide prenatal care and well-woman gynecology. At this time, she is the only certified nurse midwife delivering babies at The Regional Medical Center in Orangeburg.

Smith currently serves on the Low Country Healthy Start Perinatal Health Consortium Board and the Advanced Practice Committee for the S.C. State Board of Nursing. She is a member of the American College of Nurse Midwives, American Nurses Association and the S.C. Perinatal Association. She is currently secretary of the S.C. Chapter of Nurse Midwives.

*Special to The T&D*