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PRIZE FOR WORST TATTOO AT FEST? REMOVAL. A6



ARCHDEACON: A FOOTBALL PRAYER IS ANSWERED. D1

WOMAN WITH ADHD, AUTISM HELPING OTHERS. C1

TOP LOCAL STORY

Infant, maternal health program could lose funding

Healthy Start program has served 13,000 in Montgomery County.

By Sydney Dawes
Staff Writer

Maternal and infant death rates in Montgomery County remain high compared to state and national averages, and a local program that's geared toward preventing infant deaths and supporting the wellness of mothers could lose its federal funding next year.

The five-year Healthy Start funding cycle, which allots \$1.1 million to Five Rivers Medical Centers annually, has not been reauthorized federally. President Donald Trump's proposed 2026 budget for the Department of Health and Human Services included a cut to all Healthy Start funding.

Funding for the program could be discontinued as early as next spring, said Five Rivers Health Centers CEO Gina McFarlane-El.

"We have received funding through November, and we're waiting to get our last portion of funding from December until March," she said. "And we're not sure if we're going to be funded, any of the other programs are going to be funded, so we've been working with our federal legislators."

Healthy Start is a federal program that first launched in 1991 to fund projects that specifically target communities with high rates of infant mortality and poor maternal health outcomes.

These communities are experiencing the highest rates of infant mortality – more than 1.5 times the national average, according to the National Healthy Start Association.

Although the program was reauthorized in 2020, Congress has not authorized funding for next year and onward. Five Rivers signed onto a letter that national advocacy groups sent to federal lawmakers in July, calling for at least \$145 million to power the national program.

"For more than three decades, Healthy Start has served as a lifeline for thousands of families, particularly in maternity care



Jamaal McFarlane and his daughter, Marlea Castelanos, listen to speakers at the Edgemont Five Rivers Health Center ribbon-cutting May 11, 2022. The health center is the recipient of federal dollars that fund programs geared toward assisting families and their infants. Ohio is among the states with the highest infant mortality. STAFF

deserts, where access to prenatal and maternal care is severely limited or nonexistent," the letter said. "Established in 1991 with strong bipartisan support, Healthy Start remains a critical tool in our nation's fight against infant mortality and in improving maternal health."

Ohio is among the top states for infant deaths, with a rate of 7.11 deaths per 1,000 live births, according to 2022 data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Last year, Montgomery County

had an infant mortality rate of 7.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, according to the Ohio Department of Health's infant mortality scorecard, which tracks trends for all 88 counties.

A study released by Groundwork Ohio and Caresource this year also highlighted Montgomery County as having among the highest ratios of pregnancy-related deaths in the state and found disparities statewide in health

infant continued on A8

LOCAL IMPACT

Federal freeze shows fragility of funds

After-school programs rely on diverse funding.

By Eileen McClory
Staff Writer

Some local after-school programs are reconsidering how they structure their budgets after President Donald Trump's administration first froze and then released funds for after-school and summer programs.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers provides federal funding for spaces for children from low-income backgrounds who attend low-performing schools after the school day ends. It's meant to help students meet the academic objectives of the states in which they attend school.

Earlier this year, Trump's administration proposed getting rid of the 21st Century Community funds from next year's budget. The administration also withheld 21st CCLC federal funds for 18 days in July, eventually releasing them to local providers.

But the Boys and Girls Club of Ohio as well as the Community Building Institute in Middletown both say the pause made them realize how fragile federal funding can be.

Adam Shank, the CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Ohio, said the short-term pause on

School continued on A8

TOP NATIONAL STORY

As Guard troops arrive, crackdown ripples through DC neighborhoods

White House lauds arrests; local officials criticize intervention.

By Matt Brown, Lindsay Whitehurst and Chris Megerian
Associated Press

WASHINGTON – The main drag in Washington's Columbia Heights neighborhood is typically crammed with people peddling pupusas, fresh fruit, souvenirs and clothing. On Tuesday, though, things felt different: The

white tents that bulge with food and merchandise were scarcer than usual.

"Everything has stopped over the last week," said Yassin Yahyaoui, who sells jewelry and glass figurines. Most of his customers and fellow vendors, he said, have "just disappeared" – particularly if they speak Spanish.

The abnormally quiet street was one of many pieces of evidence showing how President Donald Trump's decision to flood the nation's capital with federal law enforcement and immigration

agents has rippled through the city. While troop deployments and foot patrols in downtown areas and around the National Mall have gotten the most attention, life in historically diverse neighborhoods like Columbia Heights is being reshaped as well.

The White House has credited Trump's crackdown with hundreds of arrests, while local officials have criticized the aggressive intervention in the city's affairs.

The confrontation escalated on

Guard continued on A8



Armed officers place handcuffs on a man from within an apartment complex Tuesday in the Petworth neighborhood of northwest Washington. JACQUELYN MARTIN / ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE LATEST

Veterans help shape a report on the war in Afghanistan. B1

President Trump vows to ban mail voting, machines. B2

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THE MENUS

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