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SEPTEMBER Edition | 2026

GFCNI global foundation for the care of newborn infants NEWSLETTER

Dear friends and supporters of GFCNI,

This month's newsletter looks at three very different aspects of neonatal and perinatal care that are closely connected by one theme: how we communicate, coordinate, and support families over time.

In the NICU, clear roles and shared expectations can strengthen teamwork, reduce conflict, and help create a more consistent environment for both professionals and families. Beyond the neonatal period, new research from Norway reminds us that children born preterm can continue to face distinct respiratory risks well into childhood and that prevention strategies must take this longer-term perspective into account. At the same time, effective care begins with understanding. A European survey on preterm birth awareness shows that feeling informed does not always mean understanding one's individual risk, highlighting the importance of clear, personalized conversations throughout pregnancy.

Together, these findings remind us that good care depends not only on what we know, but also on how well we work together and how clearly we share that knowledge.

Best wishes,

Silke Mader and the GFCNI team

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GET READY FOR WORLD PREMATURITY DAY

Free Resources for Your Campaign

World Prematurity Day is coming up on November 15, and our 2026 campaign materials are now available to support your activities. The free resource collection includes ready-to-use social media graphics, suggested key messages, a press release template, and other communication assets to help you raise awareness in your community. Selected social media graphics are also available in multiple languages, making it easier to take part wherever you are. As in previous years, all materials can be accessed and downloaded free of charge from our Trello board. Explore the resources and help us build a strong global movement for World Prematurity Day 2026!

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UPCOMING CONGRESS: CEPAS 2026

From Neonates to Adolescents: Uniting Pediatric Professionals

The Congress of the European Paediatric Academic Societies (CEPAS) 2026 will bring together professionals from across pediatrics and neonatology for four days of scientific exchange, education, and networking in Lyon. GFCNI is pleased to contribute to the congress, bringing patient- and family-centered perspectives into the exchange. Preliminary findings from the BronQ Family study on bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD) will also be presented in an interesting session on “Outcome and long-term development of preterm infants.” Learn more about CEPAS and join us in Lyon from October 28-31.

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2026 SMALL AND SICK NEWBORN CARE ESSAY CONTEST

Share Your Ideas on Follow-up Care for Newborns

Submissions are now open for the Small and Sick Newborn Care Essay Contest 2026, organized by the Newborn Toolkit in collaboration with GFCNI. Inspired by this year’s World Prematurity Day slogan, “Small babies, big potential. Invest in follow-up care to protect their future!”, health workers and newborn health advocates are invited to share how follow-up care for small and

sick newborns can place families at the center of practice. Essays can be submitted in English or French by October 27, 2026, with a £500 prize for the winning essay in each language and opportunities for international visibility.

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ERS CONGRESS 2026

Bringing Family Perspectives to Respiratory Research

At the European Respiratory Society Congress 2026 in Barcelona, the international respiratory community came together under the motto “United for Better Breathing – Partnership between patients, clinicians and researchers.” During a poster presentation, GFCNI shared preliminary results from the BronQ Family study, a collaborative research project involving healthcare professionals, scientific advisors, and parent and patient representatives. Drawing on responses from 2,453 parents and primary caregivers across seven countries, the preliminary findings highlight that the impact of bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD) extends beyond respiratory health, affecting families’ quality of life, well-being and everyday lives over the long term.

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© 2026 XV International Congress on Kangaroo Mother Care

KANGAROO MOTHER CARE

Kangaroo Mother Care Returns to Brazil for International Congress

More than two decades after Brazil last hosted the World Congress on Kangaroo Care, the international community will return to Brasília from November 18-21, 2026. The XV International Workshop and Congress on Kangaroo Mother Care and II Brazilian Congress on Kangaroo Care will bring together healthcare professionals, researchers, policymakers, students, families, and organizations from around the world. Workshops and congress sessions will explore implementation, public policy, skin-to-skin contact, neuroprotection, breastfeeding, family-centered care, follow-up, and sustainability – all with a strong focus on how Kangaroo Mother Care can be adapted across diverse health systems, cultures, and communities.

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Science

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RESPIRATORY HEALTH

Preterm Birth and Respiratory Infections: What the Pandemic Revealed

Researchers involved in IMPROVE PRETERM, an EU-funded project to improve lifelong outcomes after very preterm birth, coauthored a Norwegian study of respiratory infection hospitalizations. Nationwide registry data on children aged 1-5 showed that hospitalization rates fell during COVID-19 control measures and rebounded as measures eased. Children born at lower gestational ages experienced the largest absolute changes, although those born late preterm also showed substantial shifts. The findings highlight the relevance of gestational age and risk beyond infancy when evaluating prevention strategies, informing questions central to the project's work on vaccination.

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RISK AWARENESS

Feeling Informed Is Not Always Enough: Gaps in Preterm Birth Awareness

A survey of 247 pregnant women across five European countries found a clear gap between feeling informed about preterm birth and understanding individual risk. Nearly half of participants were classified as being at higher risk, yet more than a third of these women did not recognize their elevated risk, including some with a previous preterm birth. Recall of counseling was also limited, particularly for warning signs, monitoring, and medical interventions. The findings suggest that clear, personalized conversations – reinforced over time and supported by techniques such as teach-back – may help women better understand and remember information relevant to their pregnancy.

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SOCIAL NEEDS

Pregnancy Complications May Signal Unmet Social Needs

A U.S. study of nearly 900 Black and Latina women found that those with a history of pregnancy complications, including preterm birth, reported more unmet social needs than women without such a history. Needs related to education, transportation, employment, and family or community support were particularly prominent, while a greater number of previous complications was associated with a higher overall burden of unmet needs. Because pregnancy histories are already documented in medical records, the authors suggest they could help care teams identify families who may benefit from additional social support alongside medical follow-up.

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European Standards of Care for Newborn Health

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TEAMWORK

Clearer Teamwork Guidelines Could Help Reduce NICU Conflict

When NICU teams do not clearly define roles, responsibilities, and procedure allocation, tension can arise between fellows, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, hospitalists, and other providers. A multidisciplinary U.S. workgroup has developed recommendations to help neonatal units address these challenges more systematically. The proposed approach combines self-assessment, shared core values, written guidelines, structured communication, simulation training, and regular team meetings. While individual units will need to adapt recommendations to local staffing and training needs, clearer expectations may reduce conflict, strengthen psychological safety, and support more consistent patient care and learning across the NICU.

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