

Spotlight | ICU Baby



It is very stressful under the best of circumstances for a family to have a baby in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). But, for families with limited financial resources, having a baby in the NICU presents many logistical challenges. From the cost of transportation from their home to the hospital day-after-day, to the additional financial hardship of childcare for siblings or unpaid maternity leave, families from low income communities are faced with enormous stress and, in some cases, obstacles to be with their baby. ICU baby was founded to ensure that no baby in the NICU would go unvisited because of financial or emotional hardship. The organization provides a range of services to NICU families, including meals, essential NICU supplies, transportation assistance, information and resources, and emotional support to ensure families visit their babies in the NICU and participate in their direct care.

Recognizing that COVID-19 contributed to a particularly competitive fundraising environment, ICU baby knew they had to be more intentional about data collection and analysis to ensure their organization's story stood out. With the help of the UpMetrics platform and team, in September of 2021, ICU baby embarked on a journey to become more data-driven.

A Journey To Become More Data Driven

The ICU baby team decided to initially focus on collecting and analyzing data associated with their Transportation Assistance Program (TAP), which offers a financial stipend to offset transportation costs for low income families whose visits with their baby in the NICU. In focusing on this program, they would gather data that is necessary to receive funding from local partners. ICU baby also analyzed the benefit renewal rates and survey responses from the families that collected feedback regarding hospital visits, dosage of services provided such as gas, stipends, parking passes, bus passes, etc.



ICU baby realized that there were significant gaps in their data collection, and so the team worked to create systems and processes to collect complete data going forward and to fill gaps in historic data.



"In doing this work with UpMetrics, we recognize how critical complete data is. For us, discharge is a finite data point that a team member can look at and say... 'hey do we have all of that family's essential data to paint a picture of who we are helping?' This is so helpful to know now at the start of the year. One huge benefit of working on this program now is making these data adjustments so we can have complete data for the coming year!"

-Elizabeth Simonton, ICU baby

Learning in Community

As a member of the PhilanthropyMiami cohort, ICU baby benefited from having a community of other local nonprofit organizations who were also on a similar data journey.

Each of the 7 sessions attended by the cohort participants were designed to equip organizations like ICU baby with the skills and knowledge to use data more effectively and to train users on getting the most out of the UpMetrics platform. In addition to the Learning session, organizations had the opportunity to participate in Cohort Office Hours, 1:1 Meetings, and learning/discussion groups with other cohorts nationwide. Elizabeth notes, "I am championing this UpMetrics Hub in Miami. It is so nice to convene with other nonprofits and learn how they are leveraging data at their organizations."

Putting in the Work & Telling the Story



Putting in the Work & Telling the Story



Executive Director, Elizabeth Simonton shares that learning to use the platform took some time. “I had to really commit to learning the platform after starting off slow. There were moments when I wasn’t sure the time was going to be worth it.” After completing her training with the UpMetrics team, Elizabeth is building her own dashboards, learning how to filter data, answering questions she hadn’t been able to prior, and continuously leveraging her data in a more effective and efficient way to tell ICU baby’s story of support.

“Once I devoted the time and intentionally dove into the UpMetrics platform, I quickly realized how valuable this system could be for an organization of our size. For sure, there was a time investment in the beginning, but after the initial platforms were built out, the system has allowed for an automaticity that has proven invaluable to both me and my team. I am able to report data and feedback within minutes and I can readily evaluate whether our programs are effective or require adjustments. The process has been well worth the time and UpMetrics is quickly becoming a core component of our organizational infrastructure.”



Metrics Spotlight

Elizabeth shares that being able to understand the bigger picture of the transportation assistance program has been invaluable. Specifically, realizing that this program has a high percentage of single mothers that are traveling dozens of miles a day to be with their newborn, tells a real story of what our families with a hospitalized newborn endure. Once provided with the intervention of a financial stipend, parents are at the hospital more and their financial stress is decreased.

“A grantor told me that they distinguished our grant application from a bevy of other worthy organizations because we used data to tell our story. This is a direct result of our use of UpMetrics and we received significant funding from that grantor as a result.”

Telling the Story

Now that the ICU baby dashboards have been created and the data collection and updates are ongoing, Beth is excited to use this information to more effectively articulate the impact they are having to fundraise and continue to provide quality programs.



“ICU baby is doing critical work for the community. I am going to be able to do so much more for our community with access to these numbers. The dashboards and ease of accessibility to the data is so impressive.”

