



## **INFANT MORTALITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

The **Celebrate Day 366...Every Baby Deserves a Chance** Infant Mortality Awareness Campaign supports and inspires people from around the nation to take action in support of the Healthy People 2020 goal to improve the health and well-being of women, infants, children and families. Help the National Healthy Start Association celebrate babies living beyond the first year of life and be part of the generation that ensures that every baby has a chance...

*To take their first step. To say their first word.  
To graduate from college. To become President.  
To Celebrate Day 366.*

### **What is infant mortality?**

Infant mortality is the number of infants who die during their first year of life. It is measured by the Infant Mortality Rate, which is the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births in a given year.<sup>1</sup> The Infant Mortality Rate is commonly accepted as a measure of the general health and well-being of a population.

### **How does the United States compare to the world?**

In 2018, the United States ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> out of 36 countries which are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in infant mortality, as reported in America's Health Rankings Annual Report for 2018.

### **Infant Mortality Statistics**

- The infant mortality rate in the United States is 5.67 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.<sup>1</sup>
- With a rate of 10.75 deaths /1,000 live births, African Americans have the highest death rates among all ethnic and population groups. American Indians & Alaskan Natives have an infant death of 9.4.<sup>2</sup>
- Educational discrepancies are also apparent across color lines when confronted with infant mortality. The infant mortality rate for African American mothers with over 13 years of education was almost three times that of Non-Hispanic White mothers in 2005.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2018, the leading causes of infant death were congenital anomalies, disorders related to immaturity (short gestation & unspecified low birthweight), maternal complications, SIDS & unintentional injury.<sup>4</sup>
- According to a 2015 CDC National Vital Statistics report, 36% of infant deaths were due to preterm related causes.<sup>5</sup>
- Discrimination is also a documented source of harmful stress. One study found that women who gave birth to very low birth weight babies were more likely to have experienced racial discrimination than women who had normal weight babies.<sup>6</sup>

## How can reducing infant mortality benefit the U.S.?

- Significant savings can accrue from enabling mothers to add a few ounces to a baby's weight before birth. An increase of 250 grams (about 1/2 lb) in birth weight saves an average of \$12,000 –\$16,000 in first year medical expenses.<sup>7</sup>
- Prenatal interventions that result in a normal birth (over 2500 grams or 5.5 pounds) saves \$59,700 in medical expenses in the infant's first year.<sup>8</sup>
- The long-term cost of low birthweight infants includes re-hospitalization costs, many other medical and social service costs, and often large special education expenses, when the child enters school. These public expenses can go on for a lifetime.<sup>9</sup>

## Healthy Start to the Rescue

The federally funded Healthy Start programs are community-driven and located in the poorest neighborhoods in the United States. Since its initiation in 1991, Healthy Start has served hundreds of thousands of families. Over 63% of all Healthy Start families are African American, Hispanic, or Native American. Healthy Start specializes in outreach and home visiting – the surest way to reach the most at-risk women and families.

Healthy Start focuses on getting women into prenatal care as early in the pregnancy as possible. It is generally accepted by medical & research fields that early entrance into prenatal care is the single most critical factor in improving birth outcomes. Healthy Start has pioneered the use of women living in the community as outreach workers and home visitors as an effective method to successfully reach the most at-risk families. As a network rooted in the local community, the federal Healthy Start Initiative is distinguished as a unique delivery system where program participants are engaged and active in the quest to eliminate health disparities in their own lives, in their communities, and across the nation.

Healthy Start and NHTSA promote awareness during September, National Infant Mortality Awareness Month (NIMAM). To learn more about infant mortality and Healthy Start or to plan NIMAM activities in your community, please contact the National Healthy Start Association.



1325 G Street, NW, Suite 500 • Washington, DC 20005  
202-296-2195 • [www.nationalhealthystart.org](http://www.nationalhealthystart.org)

1Dunleavy, BP. U.S. infant mortality rate hits all-time low. CDC reports, [https://www.upi.com/Health\\_News/2020/07/16/US-infant-mortality-rate-hits-all-time-low-CDC-reports/8081594905861/](https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2020/07/16/US-infant-mortality-rate-hits-all-time-low-CDC-reports/8081594905861/)  
2 Ibid.

3 Mathews TJ, MacDorman MF. Infant mortality statistics from the 2006 period linked birth/infant death data set. National vital statistics reports; vol 58 no 17. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2010.

4 Dunleavy, op cit.

5 National Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 64, No. 9, August 6, 2015, [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr61/nvsr61\\_04.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr61/nvsr61_04.pdf).

5 Persistent Peril: Why African American babies have the highest infant mortality rate in the developed world, Ziba Kashef, Feb. 2003, RaceWire, 1 July 2011 <[http://www.arc.org/racewire/030210z\\_kashef.html](http://www.arc.org/racewire/030210z_kashef.html)>.

7 March of Dimes Perinatal Data Center. Rogowski, J. (1998) Cost-effectiveness of Care for Very Low Birthweight Infants. Pediatrics 012(1):35-43.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.