



MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: Alicia Aroche
Director of Communications
aaroche@nationalhealthystart.org
Direct (202) 301-7940

NHSA Proclaims September as National Infant Mortality Awareness Month

Washington, DC - The National Healthy Start Association (NHSA) issued a Proclamation today declaring that the month of September is officially known as National Infant Mortality Awareness Month.

“NHSA has recognized September as National Infant Mortality Awareness Month (NIMAM) since 2007. To commemorate 15 years of NIMAM, we’re making it official and issued a proclamation to that effect,” said Deborah L. Frazier, NHSA’s Chief Executive Officer. Continued Frazier, “Infant mortality is a serious issue in the United States. Our infant mortality rate (IMR) in 2022 is 5.547 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, which may not be alarming when compared against the world’s IMR of 26.693. But when you look at the IMR of other comparable countries, it’s startling. Sweden’s IMR, for example, is 1.781. The U.S. should – and can – do better.”

Leading causes of infant mortality are birth defects, preterm birth and low birthweight, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, unintentional injuries and maternal pregnancy complications. Black Americans have the highest infant death rates in the U.S. among all ethnic and population groups: 10.8 deaths per 1,000 live births, while Native American’s IMR hovers around 8.0. Adds Frazier, “There is a need to do more work on disparities in IMR and to bring awareness to and uncover and address the contributing causes of those disparities. We will never decrease the problem of the U.S. IMR until we address these disparities – and we can’t address them until we own and address the contributing causes to the problem.”

NIMAM is part of a larger NHSA initiative, the ***Celebrate Day 366...Every Baby Deserves a Chance Infant Mortality Awareness Campaign***, which supports and inspires people around the nation to act in support of the Healthy People 2030 goal to improve the health and well-being of women, infants, children and families.

NHSA is the member organization of the 101 federally-funded Healthy Start projects across the country. Since 1991, Healthy Start has served hundreds of thousands of families and helped reduce the IMR from 9.2 in 1990, the year before the Healthy Start initiative began, to its current rate.

Healthy Start projects across the nation recognize NIMAM with dedicated events such as Baby Buggy Walks or Infant Mortality Summits. Said NHSA Board President, the Rev. Tommy Rodgers, “NHSA has been amazed every year for the past 15 years of the varied ways the Healthy Start grantees raise awareness about infant mortality in their local area as well as across the nation. By recognizing September officially as National Infant Mortality Awareness Month, NHSA also recognizes both the success of the Healthy Start initiative in helping to reduce America’s IMR over the last 30-plus years and the work still in front of us to lower our IMR even further.”

Click [here](https://www.nationalhealthystart.org/celebrate-day-366) for the Proclamation, which can also be found with other NIMAM materials at <https://www.nationalhealthystart.org/celebrate-day-366>.

NHSA’s mission is to be our nation’s voice in providing leadership and advocacy for health equity, services and interventions that improve birth outcomes and family well-being.

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