

Ohio Infant Mortality at a Glance

Background

- Infant mortality, a measure of babies who die before their first birthday, is an important indicator of the health of a community.
- Infant mortality rates in Ohio have remained relatively stable between 1996 and 2007.
- Ohio's infant mortality rate in 2007 was 7.7 per 1,000 live births (Ohio Department of Health Vital Statistics).
- Ohio's infant mortality rate is worse than the nation's (6.9 per 1,000 live births in 2005, National Center for Health Statistics).
- Ohio is far from meeting the Healthy People 2010 Objective of 4.5 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- The leading causes of infant mortality are congenital anomalies, prematurity/low birth weight and sudden infant death syndrome.
- Known risk factors for poor birth outcomes (e.g., low birth weight and very low birth weight) include sexually transmitted infections, smoking, poor nutrition, extremes of pre-pregnancy weight (high or low), substance abuse, anemia, short inter-pregnancy interval (less than 24 months) and exposure to stress.
- The percent of low birth weight births in Ohio has increased from 7.5 percent in 1996 to 8.7 percent in 2007. Very low birth weight births increased from 1.4 percent in 1996 to 1.7 percent in 2007.

Disparities

- During the period 1996-2007, the ratio of black infant mortality to white infant mortality ranged from a low of 2.0 in 1998 to 2.8 in 2002.
- The ratio of black-to-white rates has been consistently remaining in the 2.5 range for the past 10 years for infant mortality, neonatal mortality and postneonatal mortality.
- Low birth weight, a contributor to infant mortality, occurs at twice the rate among black mothers as it does among white mothers.
- The incidence of very low birth weight among black mothers is two and a half times that for white mothers.
- The rate of pre-term birth, another contributor to infant mortality, is 1.5 times higher among black mothers.
- Data from the 2005 Ohio Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System indicate that 73 percent of black mothers reported their pregnancy was unintended, compared to 48 percent of white mothers.

Strategies

- The Perinatal Periods of Risk model provides a new perspective and way of understanding the underlying issues in fetio-infant mortality.
- Ohio PPOR data show the most "excess deaths" (gap between the reference population and other populations) occur in the Maternal Health and Prematurity group.
- PPOR has helped to define the population at greatest risk for poor health and birth outcomes in Ohio which are black women of all ages and teens (15-17 years of age) of all races and ethnicities.
- Intervention strategies will focus on addressing pre- and inter-conception health for these women by improving access to health care before, during and after pregnancy for both mothers and babies.