

Delaware

Reducing Infant Mortality in Delaware: Use of CDC's Division of Reproductive Health Tools to Address Infant Mortality

Public Health Problem

In 2005, Delaware documented the following health outcomes:

- A large racial disparity existed between black infant mortality rates (17/1,000 live births) and white infant mortality rates (6.8/1,000 live births)
- 19% of infant deaths were attributed to the leading cause of infant mortality - short gestation and low birth weight
- 74% of infant deaths in Delaware occurred among neonates

Initiative Goal

Reduce infant mortality in Delaware through collaborative research, program implementation, and evaluation.

Multidisciplinary Public Health Professionals Combat Infant Mortality

The Delaware Infant Mortality Initiative is composed of a consortium of public health professionals including neonatalists, maternal-fetal medicine specialists, registered nurses, internists, hospital administrators, non-profit organization directors, federally qualified health care center directors, state legislators, concerned citizens, researchers, and staff at the Delaware Division of Public Health. The Infant Mortality Initiative, which began in late 2005, is fully endorsed and supported as a Governor's Initiative and receives state funds.

The Initiative funded the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) to collect information on women prior to, during, and after pregnancy in order to better understand their experiences. The Initiative successfully initiated the Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FMIR) Program to better understand the medical and psychosocial causes of infant and fetal deaths in Delaware and established a Registry for Improved Birth Outcomes to learn more from women in the state who experienced one or more premature deliveries, low birth weight deliveries, or infant deaths.

Successful Impact

- Since the Initiative started, more than 1,500 pregnant women (10% of live births in the state/year) have received supplemental care.
- Of the women participating in the prenatal intervention program, only three experienced an infant death. This is 67% less than expected among the targeted population (vital records data.)
- As a result of information collected from these monitoring systems and registries, key focus areas were created for the Delaware statewide education campaign in order to improve birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality: weight management during pregnancy, smoking during pregnancy, increasing inter-pregnancy intervals, managing chronic disease during pregnancy, and understanding the signs and symptoms of preterm labor.
- To-date, over 4,000 women have participated in the preconception program. Of those participants, 86% report an inter-pregnancy interval \geq 18 months.