



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kent County Sees Decline in Infant Mortality

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Health Department is one of many agencies working to ensure healthy babies are being born here. There has been a decrease in infant deaths in Kent County over the past decade, mirroring a national trend. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported a significant decline in the nation's infant mortality rate; a 12 percent decrease from 2005 to 2011. Michigan is one of several states that experienced a decline.

"We have made significant strides to help deliver healthy, full-term babies," says Adam London, Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. "We know there is still much work to be done, especially in terms of the disparities seen based on race. We need to make sure women receive important nutrition, education and health information they need before and during pregnancies."

Several programs through KCHD and local hospitals are making a difference. "The Maternal Infant Health Program through the Kent County Health Department worked with nearly 1000 mothers in 2012 to promote healthy pregnancies and support good birth outcomes," London added. "Our staff with the Strong Beginnings program helped an additional 200 women last year." In addition, the Kent County Interconception Care Program is helping mothers who experienced a miscarriage, premature birth or low birth-weight delivery. By educating the mother about nutritional care, encouraging an 18 month delay between pregnancies, and delivering proper dental care, the next pregnancy lasts on average 5 weeks longer, and the baby weighs 2.5 pounds more at birth.

"In just one decade, the overall infant mortality rate dropped by 19% in Kent County," London added. By ethnicity, white infants experienced a 20% decrease in mortality, African-American babies experienced a 16% decrease, and Hispanic infants experienced a 38% decrease in mortality.

(See chart on page 2)

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



Infant Mortality Ratios by Ethnicity and Year of Birth*

Year	Overall	White	African-American	Hispanic
2002	8.3	5.9	19.0	9.5
2003	9.4	8.0	17.7	7.7
2004	8.0	6.7	14.7	12.2
2005	7.1	6.0	17.4	5.1
2006	8.9	7.8	16.5	11.2
2007	6.9	5.4	14.5	8.6
2008	7.5	6.2	12.3	10.6
2009	6.3	4.8	18.0	4.4
2010	6.1	5.1	14.5	5.2
2011	6.7	4.7	16.0	5.9

*Number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births.

(Data courtesy Kent County Fetal and Infant Mortality Review)

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