North Carolina’s Infant Mortality Reduction Efforts: Key Strategies and Programs

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Resident Black and White Infant Mortality Rates and Black/White Disparity Ratio, NC, 2017-2021

- **Black, Non-Hispanic Infant Deaths per 1,000 Births**
- **White, Non-Hispanic Infant Deaths per 1,000 Births**
- **Black/White Disparity Ratio**

Source: NC Vital Statistics/SCHS
North Carolina’s Perinatal Health Strategic Plan

• A statewide guide to improve maternal and infant health and the health of all people of reproductive age.

• Based on the “12-Point Plan to Close the Black-White Gap in Birth Outcomes: A Life-Course Approach” by Lu, Kotelchuck, Hogan, Jones, Wright, and Haflon.

• Encompasses infant mortality, maternal morbidity and mortality, and the health of all women and men of reproductive age.
Perinatal Health Strategic Plan: 2022 - 2026

• **Key differences:***
  • Increased emphasis on health equity
    • Highlights the challenges of structural racism and the social drivers of health
  • Establishes greater accountability
    • Puts a monitoring plan in place to better track outcomes
    • Includes four overarching indicators that focus on reducing health inequities in maternal and infant health
  • Strives to use more inclusive language, representative of all NC families
Perinatal Health Strategic Plan 2022-2026

Goal 1 - Address Economic and Social Inequities
   - Point 1. Undo racism
   - Point 2. Support working parents and families
   - Point 3. Reduce poverty among people of reproductive age and families
   - Point 4. Close the education gap

Goal 2 - Strengthen Families and Communities
   - Point 5. Invest in community building
   - Point 6. Support coordination and cooperation to promote reproductive justice within communities
   - Point 7. Enhance coordination and integration of family support services
   - Point 8. Strengthen father and co-parent involvement in families

Goal 3 - Improve Health Care for All People of Reproductive Age
   - Point 9. Expand access to high quality health care
   - Point 10. Improve access to and quality of maternal care in all settings
   - Point 11. Increase access to preconception, reproductive, and sexual health care for people of reproductive age
   - Point 12. Provide interconception care
## Key Strategies:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1E</td>
<td>Perinatal healthcare providers should participate in trainings around health equity, implicit bias, and cultural competency</td>
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<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>Create and expand legislation to provide paid family medical leave, earned paid sick leave, kin care, and safe days for all caregivers</td>
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<td>2C</td>
<td>Strengthen policies to support breastfeeding in the workplace and in childcare centers, and increase knowledge and uptake of breastfeeding friendly policies</td>
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<td>2F</td>
<td>Work with employers to ensure tobacco cessation services are provided to all employees</td>
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<td>3C</td>
<td>Implement policies to reduce poverty (e.g. promote financial literacy education, increase uptake of the federal Earned Income Taxed Credit, and restore the state Earned Income Tax Credit)</td>
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<td>3E</td>
<td>Increase funding for stable, safe, and affordable housing, especially during times of disaster and recovery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4E</td>
<td>Ensure that child care teachers receive compensation and benefits (including health insurance) that match their skills and education</td>
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### Key Strategies:

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<th>Perinatal Health Strategic Plan Strategy:</th>
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Perinatal Health Equity Collective

PHEC Leadership Team

- Communications Work Group
- Data and Evaluation Work Group
- Maternal Health Work Group
- Policy Work Group
- Village to Village Work Group

- Neonatal Levels of Care
- Equity in Practice
- Maternal Levels of Care
Women, Infant and Community Wellness Section (WICWS)

• The Section provides programs and services that seek to improve the overall health status of women, increase planned pregnancies, reduce infant sickness and death, and strengthen families and communities.

• Composed of three branches:
  • Infant and Community Health
  • Maternal Health
  • Reproductive Health
Division of Public Health Priorities

• NC’s healthiest future generation
  • Reduce disparities in infant mortality
    • Healthy Beginnings
    • Improving Community Outcomes for Maternal and Child Health (ICO4MCH)
  • NC Baby Love Plus
  • Reducing Infant Mortality in Communities (RIMC)

• Reduce unintended pregnancy using a reproductive justice framework
  • Family planning/collaboration with Upstream
  • Preconception health
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