

25 YEARS *OF COUNTING DELAWARE KIDS*



DATA SNAPSHOT INFANT MORTALITY

HEALTH AND HEALTH BEHAVIORS

The health of a community begins with its children. If we want to predict the health and prosperity of any community – and our state – we might simply begin by asking, “How are the children?” The health and well-being of Delaware’s children have shown progress over the past 25 years, but there is still progress to be made. Every child in Delaware should have the opportunity to begin life with a strong foundation of good health, with access to quality care and health food, and on a path to success.

HONORING OUR PAST,
BUILDING KIDS' FUTURES
25 YEARS



HEALTH AND HEALTH BEHAVIORS

25 Years of Delaware Data: Infant Mortality

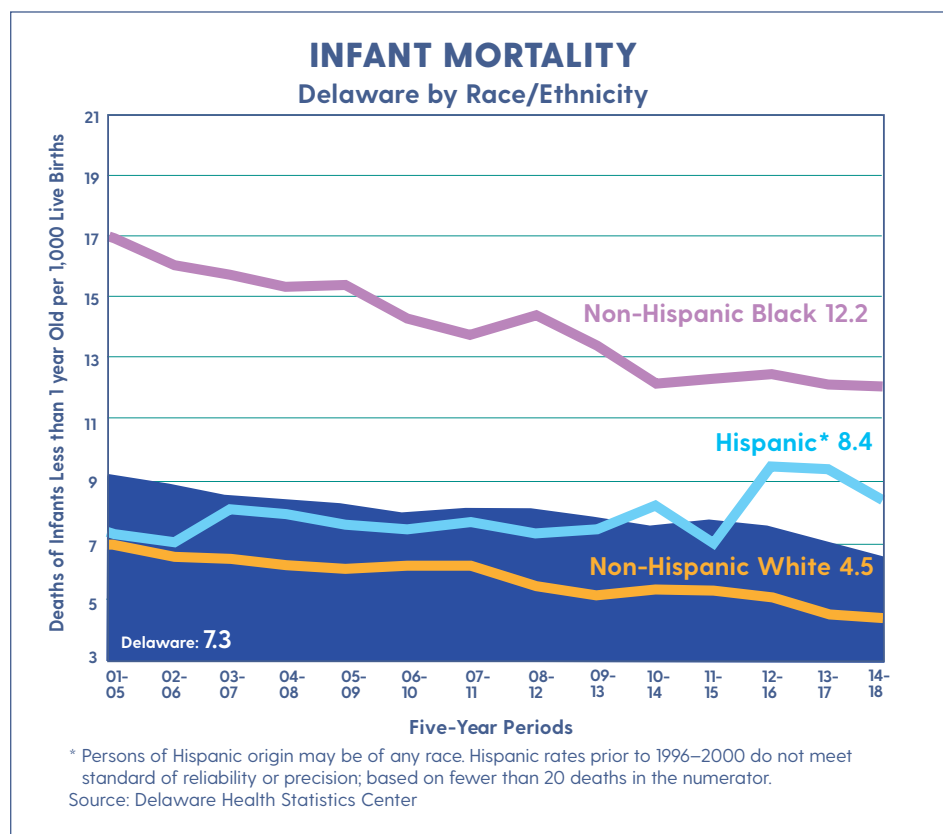
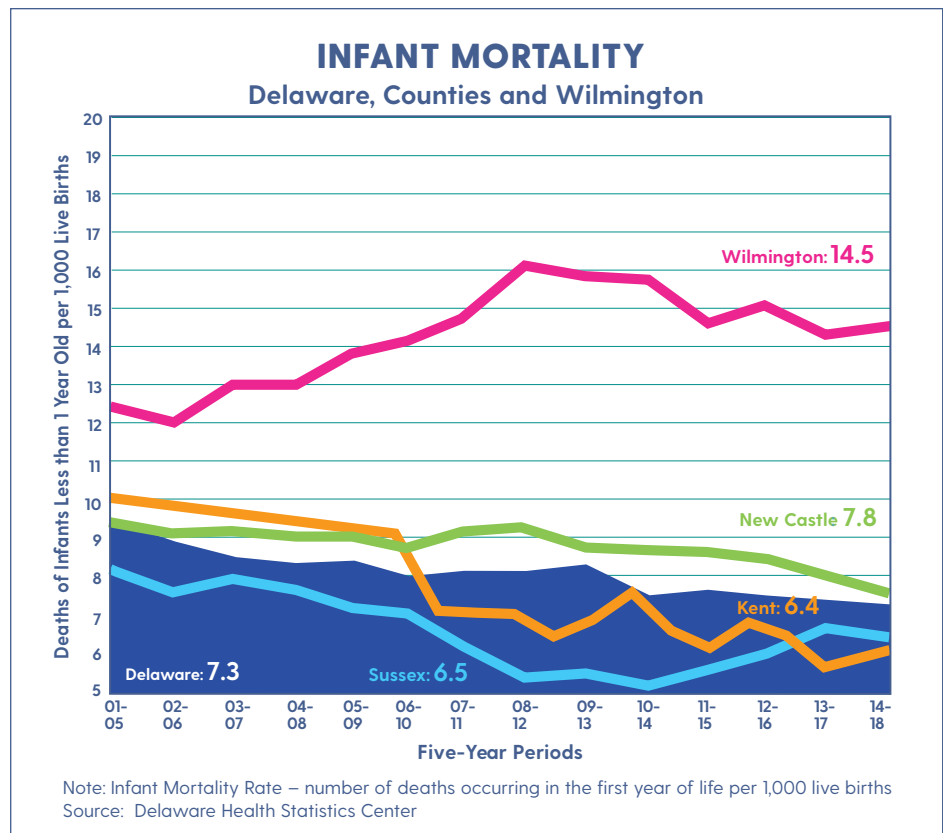
In 2004, the Annie E. Casey Foundation ranked Delaware as having the worst infant mortality rate in the nation. Understanding the implications of an infant mortality rate of 10.7 per 1,000 women, many groups throughout the state took action. KIDS COUNT in Delaware convened a meeting of statewide stakeholders, in addition to engaging local media and residents in the concern over this issue. Governor Minner established the Infant Mortality Task Force, charged with generating specific recommendations for reducing the state's infant mortality rate.

Close to \$6 million was allocated through fiscal year 2008 based on recommendations from the task force. This level of funding was a tangible display of the state's commitment to making real change because it came at a time when the state's budget was beginning to contract – at time when a hiring freeze went into effect and agencies statewide were being asked to “give back” a percentage of their funding. Nearly \$18 million was allocated to strategies detailed in the infant mortality task force recommendations before Delaware's trend line data first began to show results in 2009 with a decrease in the state's infant mortality rate.

Why Does it Matter?

Nationally, the leading causes of infant mortality are birth defects, preterm or low birthweight births, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and issues related to pregnancy and birth, including maternal complications and unintentional injuries.

The infant mortality rate measures the number of infant deaths within the first year of life from all causes and is often used as an indicator of overall maternal and child health in



HEALTH AND HEALTH BEHAVIORS

25 Years of Delaware Data: Infant Mortality



the state. Furthermore, disparities in infant mortality by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status are a measure of the inequities that exist within communities.

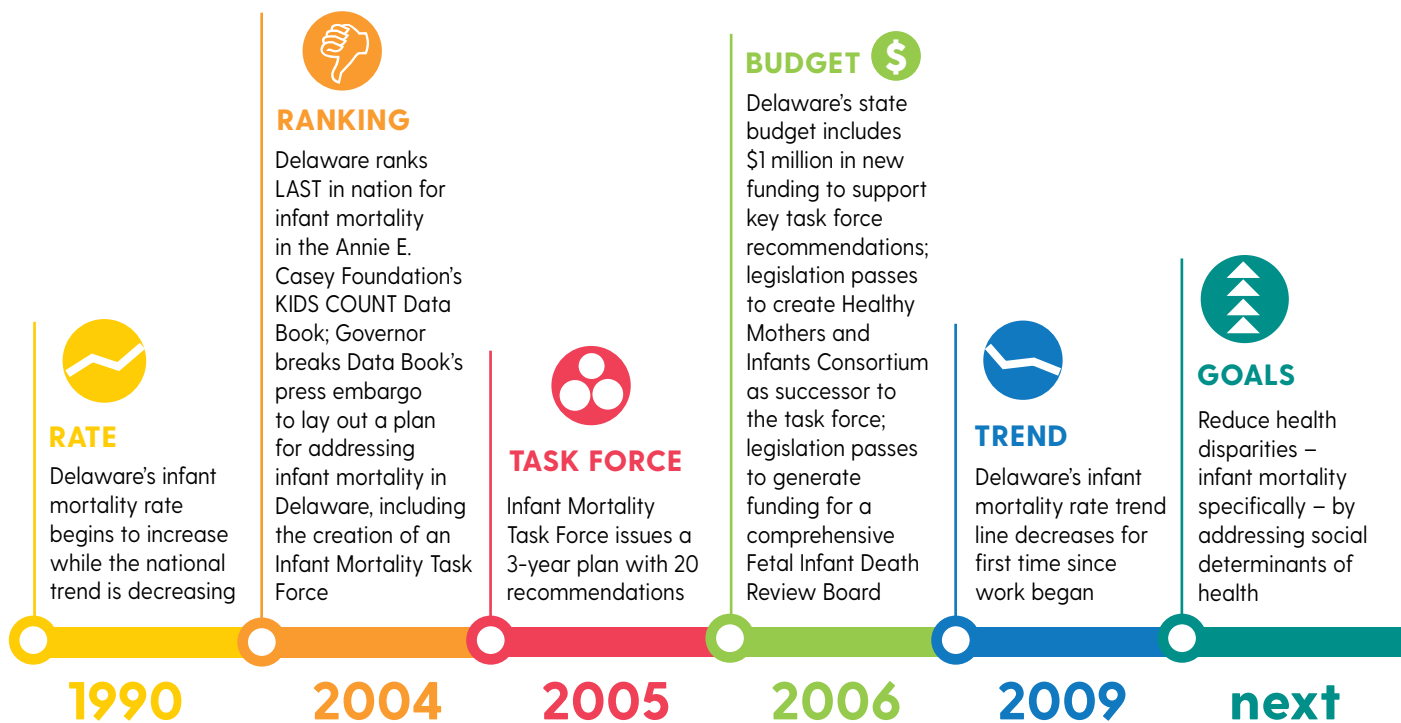
Next Steps

Today, the work continues—Delaware's infant mortality rate remains higher than the national rate and the state continues to have a dramatic racial and ethnic disparity in this measure. A closer examination of the data shows that infant mortality rates are higher than average for infants born pre-term, as well as to

mothers who had received no prenatal care, were under 20, did not complete high school, were unmarried or were smokers. Given the complexities of the causes of low birthweight and infant mortality, it will take a multifaceted approach to address the biological, social and environmental determinants including maternal health and wellness. The Delaware Healthy Mothers and Infants Consortium remains a powerful voice and force – advocating for targeted strategies – in the fight to further reduce infant mortality in Delaware. ♦



INFANT MORTALITY TIMELINE





This research was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the State of Delaware, and the University of Delaware. We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the author(s) alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of these organizations.

The photographs in this data snapshot do not necessarily represent the situations described.

Center for Community Research and Service
Biden School of Public Policy and Administration
College of Arts and Sciences
University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716-7350
302-831-4966 · Fax 302-831-4225
email: kids-count@udel.edu · www.dekidscount.org

Copyright © 2020, KIDS COUNT in Delaware

Please feel free to copy all or portions of this report. We welcome further distribution but require acknowledgment of KIDS COUNT in Delaware in any reproduction, quotation, or other use.

A pdf download of this publication and other KIDS COUNT publications are available at no charge at www.dekidscount.org. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.