



PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

Changing Our Future Together

DAY 5:

Launch of A 5-Year Plan to Reduce African-American Infant Mortality High Desert Regional Center

335 East Avenue I, Rm 11A, Lancaster, CA 93535
11:00am-12:00pm

We end National Public Health Week with a focus on the health of LA County's infants. The time from conception through the first year of life marks the period when humans are most sensitive to the environment. Since the health of infants reflects the public's health on every front, it is a fitting place to end the week.

Measuring infant health

Infant mortality rate (IMR) is the number of infants who die in Year 1 of life for every thousand live births. At first glance, LAC's IMR of 4 deaths per thousand looks good compared to rates for the U.S. (IMR of 6) or California (IMR of 7). But a closer look shows stark inequalities across the County. There is more than a three-fold difference between rates for African-Americans and those for other groups; there is almost a three-fold difference between communities with the highest and lowest rates.

We can do better

This is not a new problem in LA County or in the U.S. What is new, is research that points to stress, including stress associated with poverty and racism, as the link between a mother's race/ethnicity or community of residence and the health of her baby.

At this event, we will launch a plan, the result of more than a year of collaborative planning to address inequities in infant mortality rates and improve the health of newborns in our County.

Key features of the plan will include strategies that:

- **Reduce the stress faced by African American women due to economic hardship and the daily experience of racism.**
Our plan targets issues from housing insecurity to biased treatment by program employees.
- **Help women deal with stress through support and empowerment.**
Specifics include woman-to-woman support in a group prenatal care setting, fatherhood programs, and incorporation of voter registration into public health programs for women.
- **Minimize the impact of stress on the health of mom and baby.**
Key among these is One Key Question which calls for screening women for pregnancy intent at every doctor visit so women can get healthy before they become pregnant.

Come celebrate the end of Public Health Week by joining efforts to improve health for all LA County mothers and infants!