

36th National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill
Black Nurses: A Call for Transformative Health Equity Globally

Implications of Black Infant Mortality

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) serves as a national nursing body to influence legislation and policies that support comprehensive efforts to reduce infant mortality and its devastating effects. Medical neglect towards historically marginalized infants is a longstanding documented disparity that disproportionately impacts the Black community. NBNA calls on the 118th Congress to address infant mortality and its far-reaching effects as a urgent public health crisis.

Background

- The preterm birth rate is **52%** higher among Black women than White women.
- Black mothers were twice as likely to receive late or no prenatal care compared to White mothers.
- The infant mortality rate for Black Americans is **2.4** times the rate for White Americans and has increased by **3%** from 2021 to 2022.
- Black infants are almost **4.0** times more likely to die from complications related to low birth weight compared to White infants and have **2.9** times the sudden infant death syndrome mortality rate.
- Black Americans are more likely to be uninsured and are less likely to have Family Medical Leave Act benefits or utilize Maternity leave programs than White Americans.
- Receiving care from a Black health care provider can result in Improvements in mortality for Black infants.
- Black infant mortality has serious implications for the health and well-being of all Americans.

Recommendations to Legislators

NBNA calls on the 118th Congress to:

- **Support the Mothers and Newborn Success Act – S. 964** -establishes and expands various health programs to improve, and reduce racial, ethnic, and geographic disparities in maternal health outcomes.
- **Support the Nationally Enhancing the Well-being of Babies through Outreach and Research Now Act” or the “NEWBORN Act - S. 2978/H.R. 5789** - funds the establishment and implementation of infant mortality pilot programs in metropolitan areas with high rates of infant mortality in historically marginalized communities.
- **Support the Protecting Moms and Babies Against Climate Change Act. S.1601 / H. R. 3302** - establishes a grant program to protect mothers and babies from risks associated with climate change.
- **Support the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who Deliver Infants Early Act. H.R. 3226/ S. 1573** - reauthorizes through FY2028 and otherwise modifies research and education programs for preventing premature births.

- **Support the Healthy Moms and Babies Act S. 948 / H. R. 4605.** Establishes programs and requirements to support maternal and child health services under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Increases access to healthcare services in historically marginalized communities.
- **Support the Bipartisan Primary Care and Health Workforce Act S. 2840.** Improves access and quality of primary health care and expands the health workforce.
- **Support the Improving Care and Access to Nurses Act S. 2418.** Allows non-physician health care providers to provide care and services under Medicare & Medicaid thus increasing access in historically marginalized communities.
- **Support the Perinatal Workforce Act H.R. 3523/ S. 1710** - Grows and diversifies the perinatal workforce (specifically).
- **Support the Premature Infant Nutrition Act of 2024.** Mandates insurance reimbursement for human milk derived human milk fortifiers and other specialty human milk derived nutritional products for preterm and critically ill infants.

References

1. Jang, C. J., & Lee, H. C. (2022). A review of racial disparities in infant mortality in the US. *Children*, 9(2). <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-9067/9/2/257>
2. March of Dimes. (n.d.) *2022 March of Dimes Report Card for United States*. Retrieved, November 10, 2023, from <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/united-states/report-card>
3. Hill, L., Artiga, S., & Ranji, U. (2022). Racial disparities in maternal and infant health: Current status and efforts to address them. *KFF. Racial equity and health policy*. <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/racial-disparities-in-maternal-and-infant-health-current-status-and-efforts-to-address-them/>
4. U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Department of Minority Health. (n. d.) *Infant mortality and African Americans*. Retrieved October 20, 2023, from <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/infant-mortality-and-african-americans>
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). *Infant mortality*. Retrieved October 20, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/infantmortality.htm>
6. Ely, D. M., & Driscoll, A. K. (2023, November). *Infant mortality in the United States: Provisional data from the 2022 period linked birth/infant death file*. (Vital Statistics Rapid Release Report No.33.). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr033.pdf>
7. Falconer, R. (2023, November 1). U. S. infant mortality rate rises for the first time in over two decades. <https://www.axios.com/2023/11/01/us-infant-mortality-rate-rises-first-time-two-decades>