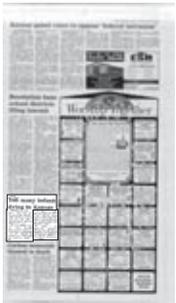


Infant Mortality Media Log
Kansas Action for Children

February-April, 2010

Date	Headline	Source
04/02/10	Kansas group pushes for more data on infant mortality	Wichita Eagle
04/01/10	State of Kansas urged to address infant mortality rates	Kansas Public Radio
04/01/10	Group wants causes of infant mortality studied	KWCH-TV
04/01/10	Group wants Kansas to collect information on causes of high infant mortality	The Republic
04/01/10	Group wants Kansas to collect information on causes of high infant mortality	FOX 4 News
04/01/10	Group wants causes of infant mortality studied	Greenwich Time
04/01/10	Group wants causes of infant mortality studied	KFDA-10
03/31/10	Cry for answers: Group wants to know "why" behind infant death rates	Hutchinson News
03/03/10	Infant mortality data collection up in air	KHI News Service
02/24/10	Blue ribbon panel on infant mortality announces interim recommendations	Linn County News
02/15/10	Blue ribbon panel on infant mortality announces interim recommendations	Coffeyville Journal
02/10/10	Panel acts to curb infant deaths	Atchison Globe
02/10/10	Kansas' infant mortality rate continues to climb	Holton Recorder
02/05/10	Infant mortality rates higher in Kansas	Council Grove Republican
02/05/10	Panel probes high infant mortality rate in Kansas	Emporia Gazette
02/05/10	Panel probes high infant mortality rate in Kansas	Garden City Telegram
02/05/10	Kansas infant mortality rate above nation's	Dodge City Daily Globe
02/05/10	Panel to review state's high infant death rate	Parsons Sun
02/05/10	Panel probes high infant mortality rate in Kansas	Junction City Daily Union
02/05/10	Panel probes high infant mortality rate in Kansas	Leavenworth Times
02/05/10	Infant deaths high in Kansas	Salina Journal
02/05/10	Panel probes high infant mortality rate in Kansas	Hutchinson News
02/05/10	Kansas: A risky place to be born	Iola Register
02/04/10	Too many infants dying in Kansas	Iola Register
02/04/10	Officials hope to reduce state's infant mortality rate	Lawrence Journal-World
02/04/10	Infant mortality panel announces recommendations	Abilene Reflector-Chronicle
02/04/10	Blue ribbon panel on infant mortality announces interim recommendations	Liberal Times
02/04/10	Infant mortality alarming	Topeka Capital-Journal
02/03/10	Infant mortality recommendations made	KHI News Service

Iola Register
Iola, KS
Circ. 3720
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2/4/2010
32351



Too many infants¹ dying in Kansas

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — A panel that has been reviewing the high rate of infant mortality in Kansas said the state has to increase public awareness and access to care.

The Blue Ribbon Panel on Infant Mortality announced its interim recommendations Wednesday.

In 2007, Kansas had almost eight infant deaths per 1,000 live births —

which is 20 percent higher than the national rate of 6.6 per 1,000 live births. Statistics show that black infants in Kansas are more than twice as likely to die than white infants.

The panel is also requesting legislative authority for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to use vital records data for surveillance.

Lawrence
Journal-World
Lawrence, KS
Circ. 19791
From Page:
1
2/4/2010
32426



115 Officials hope to reduce state's infant mortality rate

By Scott Rothschild

rothschild@ljworld.com

TOPEKA — Health officials Wednesday issued recommendations aimed at reducing Kansas' infant mortality rate, which is 20 percent higher than the national rate.

The recommendations include expanded data gathering and research; increased public awareness; and improvements in access to early prenatal care.

In 2007, the infant mortality rate in Kansas was 7.9 deaths per 1,000 live births, according to the Kansas Blue Ribbon Panel on Infant Mortality.

Among black infants in Kansas, the mortality rate was twice the rate of whites and

was the 47th highest in the nation. Black infants represent 7 percent of births in Kansas and 17 percent of deaths.

"In order to improve Kansas' infant mortality rate, the first step is to have a better understanding of what factors are contributing to this rate," said Dr. Dennis Cooley, chair of the blue ribbon panel and president of the Kansas chapter of the American Acad-

emy of Pediatrics.

Thirty years ago, Kansas' infant mortality rate compared favorably with that of other states, the panel reported. But in recent years, Kansas' rate has stagnated while the rest of the country's rate declined. Kansas also has a higher rate than neighboring states.

Kansas Action for Children issued a report that said Kansas is missing out on federal funds to lower the infant mortality rate because of a lack of comprehensive data.

Both the organization and blue ribbon panel recommended that the Kansas Department of Health and Environment be given authority to collect and analyze information about infant deaths.

The leading causes of infant deaths in Kansas are congenital anomalies, pre-term birth and low birth weight, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and maternal complications of pregnancy. Two-thirds of infant deaths are within the first 28 days of life.

— Statehouse reporter Scott Rothschild can be reached at 785-423-0668.

Council Grove
Republican
Council
Grove, KS
Circ. 1877
From Page:
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2/5/2010
31138



115 Kansas Today

TOPEKA (AP) — Infant mortality rates in Kansas are higher than the national average, and black infants have been dying twice as often as white infants, raising concern among state officials.

"It embarrasses me," said Dr. Dennis Cooley, chairman of a panel charged with studying the problem of infant mortality in Kansas. "I would hope that it would embarrass others in the state."

Kansas' 2007 rate of 7.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, was 20 percent higher than the national rate of 6.6 for 1,000 live births, according to the Kansas Department of Health.

Black infants in the state also died more than twice as often as white infants, with black infants representing about 7 percent of births but 17 percent of deaths, the department said. Nationally, black infant mortality has also been about twice as high as non-Hispanic whites, according to 2005 statistics from the Department of Health and Human Services.

In Missouri, the overall infant mortality rate has been at 7.3 deaths per 1,000 live births. Black infants in Missouri die at a rate of 14.2 per 1,000 live births, according to the Missouri Vital Statistics Report.

The Kansas panel on infant mortality released its preliminary findings on how to address the issue Wednesday. The panel has also sponsored legislation that would allow public health researchers in Kansas to collect information on births and infant deaths.

Iola Register
Iola, KS
Circ. 3720
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2/5/2010
32351



¹¹⁵Kansas: a risky place to be born

Infant mortality in Kansas is 20 percent higher, at almost eight for every thousand live births, than the national average of 6.6. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment is working with a panel to find out why so many Kansas babies die and recommend ways to reverse the trend.

What the panel will discover is that too many pregnant women in Kansas don't get adequate prenatal care and bring low-weight, unhealthy babies into the world that are then poorly cared for, get sick and die.

Just how bad is the Kansas record?

Here is a list of nations in which the infant mortality rate is *half* the Kansas number, or less: Iceland, Singapore, Japan, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Hong Kong, the Czech Republic and Andorra. Another 16 nations have rates under five — about 40 percent lower than Kansas.

It is much more than a coincidence that nations which have universal health care have low infant mortality rates. The rate in neighboring Canada, for example, is 4.8. Japan is an even safer place to be born — the death rate for infants there is 3.2.

Part of the explanation is attitude.

Citizens in nations with universal health care grow up conditioned to use health care facilities routinely. Where public family clinics are available, pregnant women use them to take care of themselves and their fetuses. After birth, they take advantage of those same clinics to be certain their newborn is properly fed and monitored.

Maybe it's just a cultural thing, but that study committee will also discover that a certain segment of the Kansas population is not conditioned to seek professional medical help and guidance as a matter of course. Perhaps it's a matter of affordability. If so, it is also worth noting that all of the nations listed above spend far less than the United States does on health care every year and most spend no more than half as much.

It will be interesting to see how many of these comparisons are included in the report made by the Blue Ribbon panel which is studying the high infant mortality rate in Kansas; interesting, that is, to see just how blue those ribbons are.

— Emerson Lynn, jr.

Atchison Globe
Atchison, KS
Circ. 3680
From Page:
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2/10/2010
32027



Panel acts to curb 115 infant deaths

A blue ribbon panel has put improved data and surveillance, expanded research and public awareness at the head of listed recommendations to stop the growing rate of infant mortality in Kansas.

The 22-member panel was formed this past June to meet the issue of infant deaths in Kansas, where mortality rates have

mortality rates have climbed above those of most other states.

The panel chaired by Dennis Cooley MD, presi-

dent of Kansas Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics, announced its findings this past week.

"The panel has issued several recommendations," Dr. Cooley said. "One of the most important being to expand surveillance and research.

Additional recommenda-

tions made to KDHE include public education, increased access to care and services, and implementation of programs and interventions.

In 2007, the Kansas rate of 7.9 deaths per 1,000 live births was 20 percent higher than the national rate of 6.6 percent. Records indicate that black infants represented 7 percent of births and 17 percent of deaths.



Holton Recorder
Holton, KS
Circ. 4724
From Page:
1B
2/10/2010
32324



¹¹⁵ Kansas' infant mortality rate continues to climb

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-The Iola Register

Linn Co. News
Pleasanton, KS
Circ. 2198
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2/24/2010
32453



115 Blue Ribbon Panel on infant mortality announces interim recommendations 7

The Kansas Blue Ribbon Panel on Infant Mortality announced interim recommendations for addressing Kansas' high infant mortality rate today, a rate which is exceeding the rates of most other states.

"The Blue Ribbon Panel on Infant Mortality has issued several recommendations with one of the most important ones being to expand surveillance and research," said Dennis Cooley, MD, Chair of the Blue Ribbon Panel and President of the Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. "In order to improve Kansas' infant mortality rate, the first step is to have a better understanding of what factors are contributing to this rate."

One of the initiatives being led by the Blue Ribbon Panel is to request legislative authority for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to use vital records data for surveillance.

"By collecting the data needed on infant deaths, Kansas will have an opportunity to apply for federal money from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention," Dr. Cooley said.

Additional recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Panel include increased public awareness and education; increased access to care and services; and implementation of programs and interventions.

The Blue Ribbon Panel, which is comprised of 22 knowledgeable members in maternal, infant and child health, was formed in June 2009 to review the infant mortality problem in Kansas and deliver recommendations to the Secretary of the KDHE through the Governor's Child Health Advisory Committee.

"Infant mortality in Kansas is a great concern for us," Roderick Bremby, KDHE Secretary, said. "In recent years, the Kansas infant mortality rate has

stagnated while the U.S. rate continued to decline. The Blue Ribbon Panel's initial recommendations are a great beginning to addressing this concern."

In 2007, Kansas' rate of 7.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births was 20 percent higher than the national rate of 6.6 per 1,000 live births. Black infants represent seven percent of births and 17 percent of deaths; this is more than double that of the rate among white infants.

As a result of this growing concern, the Blue Ribbon Panel has been reviewing analyses of both Kansas and national data trends, commissioned a best practices literature review and discussed the viability and potential impact of possible solutions for Kansas. The Blue Ribbon Panel will continue to meet and research further short and long-term recommendations.

More information on the Blue Ribbon Panel is available at <http://www.data-counts.net/chac/>

Infant mortality data collection up in the air

By KHI News Service

Wednesday, March 3, 2010

TOPEKA — A measure that would let health officials take information from birth certificates in order to survey mothers of newborns faces an uncertain future in the Kansas Legislature.

Senate Bill 448 was introduced earlier at the recommendation of a blue ribbon panel that studied the state's relatively high infant mortality rates.

The measure would allow the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to use information from birth certificates to contact new mothers to learn more about their pregnancies and their newborn babies. Health officials say the information would be helpful for developing ways to decrease the state's infant mortality rate.

Current law specifically prohibits KDHE from using information from birth certificates to follow up with new mothers.

The bill was rejected last month in the Kansas Senate after a controversial amendment was added that would have changed some of the definitions in the bill and would have allowed special stillborn certificates to be issued for some pregnancies not carried to term.

It was later amended into SB 488 during Senate floor debate. That bill would require prospective employees of KDHE's Bureau of Health Informatics who work with vital statistics records to undergo background checks and fingerprinting as a condition of employment.

The bill was then referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Sen. Tim Owens, R-Overland Park, the committee's chairman, said he wasn't sure what his committee would do with the bill.

Though both issues covered in the bill deal with vital statistics, he said he would prefer to debate each separately.

"I have some concerns about what this opens up," he said. "I don't particularly like it there. I don't know what I'm going to do with it yet."

Sen. Jim Barnett, R-Emporia, chairman of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, said he would continue to work to find a vehicle for the birth certificate provisions that the Senate would approve.

"I would like to see this legislation pass at least one body – therefore, it would be conferenceable," he said.

[Public health officials have said](#) that the ability to collect data on newborns could provide clues to the state's high infant mortality rate.



Cry for answers

Group wants to know 'why' behind infant death rates

By Darcy Gray - The Hutchinson News - dgray@hutchnews.com

Kansas ranks 29th among other states in the nation for infant mortality and is one of 13 states that doesn't collect information about the underlying causes.

Both are statistics the group Kansas Action for Children - a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that focuses on improving the lives of children and their families - would like to see changed. Their first push is to enact legislation that would allow health workers to interview the mother of a deceased infant in order to better understand the causes behind infant mortality.

"Kansas ranks higher than neighboring states and the nation, said Stephanie Mullholland, communications director for Kansas Action for Children.

Under the legislation, health workers would be able to interview the mother of an infant who has died, in order to gather information to help reduce the infant mortality rate. The proposal was amended into House Bill 2454 on Tuesday and will be addressed in a conference committee when the Legislature reconvenes April 26, said Ryan Wright, KAC director of development.

Mullholland said some of the questions health workers would ask would include: Did the mother have access to prenatal care? If she didn't, was it because she didn't have health insurance? Did she have transportation to see a doctor?

"Thirty-seven other states are already collecting this kind of data," Mullholland said.

Officials could identify trends from the additional data, which, in turn, could offer insight to what additional steps local agencies can take to prevent infant deaths, she said.

The stats

There were 303 deaths of children under 12 months old in 2008 in Kansas, and 1,510 infant deaths between 2004 and 2008 in the state, according to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

The state's infant mortality rate is 7.4 based on that five-year period, meaning there were 7.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The national infant death rate average is 6.7, Mullholland said, and Iowa, for example, has an infant mortality rate of 5.1.

In Reno County, the rate is 6.9, with 29 infant deaths recorded between 2004 and 2008, according to KDHE.

Undetermined deaths among children are most likely to occur among infants, according to statistics from the Kansas State Child Death Review Board, which meets monthly and examines the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Kansas children under 18 years old.

Fourteen of the 18 undetermined deaths in 2007 were of children 1-year-old and younger, according to the most recent statistics available from the state child death review board. Some cases revealed

"incomplete investigations or law enforcement agencies not being informed of the death," the board reported.

A better way

KAC is pursuing the legislation in the hope that health workers would be allowed to gather critical data after any infant death, as a way to fill in the information gaps left behind in traditional investigations.

"In some instances, autopsies were not performed or were incomplete, or toxicology reports on the victim were not requested," the child death review board reported.

"We want to address what's going on at the local level and what the specific causes (of infant deaths) might be," Mullholland said.

Additionally, if legislation is passed and the state could gather the additional information on infant mortality, Kansas would become eligible for federal funding through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mullholland said. The federal funding could cover the costs of the interviews and data collection, she said.

The legislation also would require health workers to inform anyone they want to interview that participation is voluntary. If the mother is under 18 years old, workers would have to get consent from a parent or guardian.

"What we've found is when a family loses a child, they're always very interested in helping to make sure that doesn't happen to other families," Mullholland said.

Jan Bretz-Hughes, who coordinates a Hutchinson support group called Compassionate Friends, agreed.

"I think couples would be glad to talk about it," she said. "A couple is needing to talk about it, and after a few weeks, a mother's friends don't want to talk about it anymore.

"It might uncover more data as to how poverty affects (infant mortality) or any mitigating circumstances."

Bretz-Hughes, whose 16-year-old daughter died in a car crash, has been offering the Compassionate Friends support group for nearly 15 years. Couples who have lost an infant or had a stillborn infant meet the third Monday of every month in the library of Holy Cross Catholic School in Hutchinson.

"I think families who have lost a child are very eager to make something good come from that death," she said. "Even if it's an interview or someone gathering information, most families I think would see that as a helpful thing that could come from their child's death."



Group wants causes of infant mortality studied

Associated Press - April 1, 2010 10:34 AM ET

HUTCHINSON, Kan. (AP) - A group that focuses on improving the lives of children wants Kansas to begin collecting information about the causes of infant mortality.

Kansas ranks 29th in the country for its infant mortality rate. It is 1 of 13 states that doesn't collect information about the underlying causes for the deaths.

The nonprofit group Kansas Action for Children is pushing for legislation that would allow health workers to interview the mother of a deceased infant. The group says information gathered from those interviews could help reduce the infant mortality rate.

Ryan Wright, director of development for the group, says the legislation will be addressed in a conference committee when the Legislature reconvenes April 26.

Information from: The Hutchinson News, <http://www.hutchnews.com>

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Posted on Fri, Apr. 02, 2010

Kansas group pushes for more data on infant mortality

BY DARCY GRAY
Hutchinson News

HUTCHINSON — Kansas ranks 29th among other states in the nation for infant mortality and is one of 13 states that doesn't collect information about the underlying causes.

Both are statistics the group Kansas Action for Children — a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that focuses on improving the lives of children and their families — would like to see changed.

"Kansas ranks higher than neighboring states and the nation," said Stephanie Mullholland, communications director for Kansas Action for Children.

Its first push is to enact legislation that would allow health workers to interview the mother of a deceased infant in order to better understand the causes behind infant mortality.

The proposal was amended into House Bill 2454 this week and will be addressed in a conference committee when the Legislature reconvenes April 26, said Ryan Wright, Kansas Action for Children's director of development.

Mullholland said some of the questions health workers would ask would include: Did the mother have access to prenatal care? If she didn't, was it because she didn't have health insurance? Did she have transportation to see a doctor?

She said 37 other states are already collecting this kind of data.

Officials could identify trends from the additional data, which, in turn, could offer insight to what additional steps local agencies can take to prevent infant deaths, she said.

There were 303 deaths of children under 12 months old in 2008 in Kansas, and 1,510 infant deaths between 2004 and 2008, according to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

The state's infant mortality rate of 7.4 is based on that five-year period, meaning there were 7.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The national infant death rate average is 6.7, Mullholland said, and Iowa, for example, has an infant mortality rate of 5.1.

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