



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Infant mortality rate in Alabama reaches all-time low in 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health announces that the infant mortality rate of 8.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2009 was the lowest ever recorded. This represented 513 infant deaths, also the fewest ever and 99 fewer than in 2008 when the rate was 9.5.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "We are encouraged by the significant progress made in lowering our infant death rate. Alabamians should be proud of the efforts made to address our traditionally high infant mortality rate."

- The infant mortality rate for **black** infants (13.3 per 1,000 live births) was the lowest it has ever been, and it was very close to the 2007 national rate for blacks at 13.2.
- The **white** rate of 6.2 is also the lowest in history. The white rate, however, continues to be above the national average of 5.6 in 2007.

Declines were seen in the percent of pregnant women who smoked and the percent of births to teens. Infants of mothers who smoke were 41 percent more likely to die. Infants of teen mothers are 68 percent more likely to die.

A decline was seen in the percent of women who received adequate prenatal care and infants of mothers who receive less than adequate prenatal care have a 12 percent increased risk of dying in their first year. A decrease was seen in the number of babies born at low birth weight (less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces) and these babies are 20 times more likely to die than infants of normal weight. Increasing the percent of women who receive adequate prenatal care and decreasing the percent of low weight babies represent opportunities to further impact the infant mortality rate.

"We must remain committed to initiatives that improve our state's infant mortality rate," Dr. Williamson said. "We are pleased to see the reduction in tobacco use among expectant mothers. We want to continue to reduce the tobacco usage statewide, particularly among expectant mothers."

Graphs and detailed charts are available at the Alabama Department of Public Health Web site at www.adph.org/healthstats.