



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## Alabama's infant mortality rate decreases in 2006

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health announces a decline in Alabama's infant mortality rate in 2006, with a rate of 9.0 deaths per 1,000 live births and a total of 569 infant deaths. In 2005 Alabama's infant mortality rate was 9.3. However, the state showed a disturbing rise in teen births, from 7,903 in 2005 to 8,670 in 2006.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "The good news is that our infant mortality rate is down, but it's not where we would like it to be. The bad news is that the percentage of births to teens went up and the percentage of births to mothers with adequate prenatal care fell to its lowest level in more than a decade. As in previous years, having no insurance is associated with the highest infant mortality."

Looking at the statistics by race, black infant mortality declined from 14.4 in 2005 to 14.3 per 1,000 live births in 2006, while white infant mortality decreased from 7.2 to 6.7. The infant mortality rate for teen births was similar for both races, with white teens experiencing an 11.8 infant mortality rate and black teens a slightly lower 11.7 rate. But in the adult population, the infant mortality rate gap remained pronounced with white adults at 6.0 compared with 14.7 for black adults.

Overall, the infants of adults had a better infant mortality rate (8.5) than teenagers (11.6). Low birthweight infants had a 59.6 infant mortality rate, while normal weight infants had a 3.0 rate of infant deaths.

Unfortunately, Alabama's adequacy of prenatal care fell to its lowest level in more than a decade. Data from the department's Center for Health Statistics show that only 75.3 percent of all live births were to women with adequate prenatal care. Mothers with the highest levels of prenatal care were in the 30- to 39-year-old age range (83.2 percent) and in those ages 40 and older (80.7 percent). Infant mortality was higher among women receiving less than adequate care (11.2) than in those with adequate care (8.3).

Having no insurance is associated with the highest infant mortality. Mothers with private insurance had the lowest infant mortality (6.1), followed by women on Medicaid (10.6), and worst, self pay (17.1).

Maternal smoking results in a 40 percent higher infant mortality rate. The infants of non-smoking mothers had an 8.4 rate of infant mortality versus a 12.0 rate for smokers. One in five (20.5) white teens smoked during pregnancy, while only 3.4 percent of black teens smoked.

Married women had a lower infant mortality rate (7.6) than unmarried mothers (11.5). Women with 13 or more years of education had a lower infant mortality rate than women with less formal education.

Counties with the highest three-year average infant mortality rate for the years 2004-2006 were as follows: Bibb, 16.6; Coosa, 16.3; Hale, 16.2; Pickens, 14.0; Pike, 13.7; Macon, 13.6; Washington, 13.6; Clarke, 13.2. Counties with the lowest rates for this three-year period were Cleburne, 2.1; Henry, 3.5; Choctaw, 4.1; Crenshaw, 4.1; Cullman, 5.1; Chambers, 5.7; Covington, 5.8.

For detailed infant mortality statistics by county and for other statistical information, visit <http://www.adph.org/healthstats>.