

# Infant Mortality

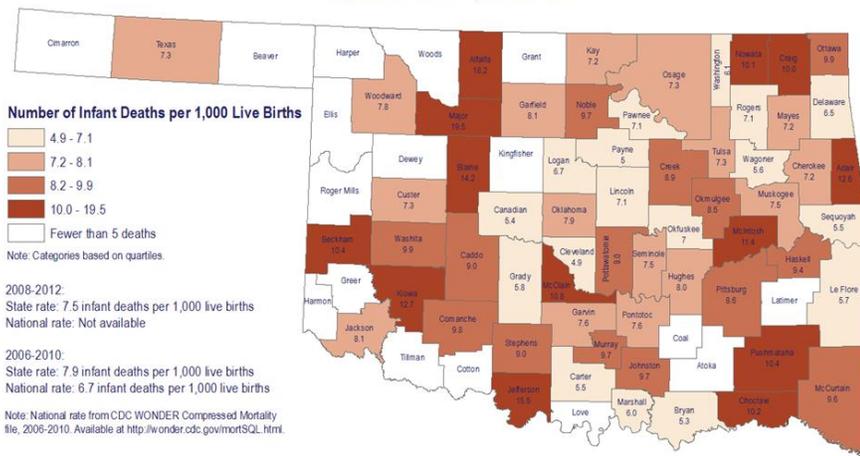
The infant mortality rate (IMR) is an important indicator of the health of a nation, and is also a reflection of maternal health, accessibility and quality of primary health care, and the availability of supportive services in the community.<sup>28</sup> The leading causes of infant death include congenital malformations (i.e., medical conditions present at birth), disorders related to short gestation (fewer than 37 weeks of pregnancy completed) and low birth weight (less than 5 lbs., 8 oz.), and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).<sup>25</sup> Oklahoma's IMR has declined 12.8% from its recent high of 8.6 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 7.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2012.<sup>8</sup> However, the rate is still significantly higher than the national (preliminary) rate of 6.05 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011.<sup>29</sup> While organizations across Oklahoma have been working together to reduce infant mortality as part of the Preparing for a Lifetime, It's Everyone's Responsibility initiative,<sup>30</sup> there is still much work to do.

Racial disparities exist in IMR, with rates among Oklahoma's Black/African American infants being more than double the rates of White and Asian/Pacific Island infants. The IMR for Black/African American infants declined between 2003-2007 and 2008-2012 (16.4 to 14.6, respectively),<sup>8</sup> but is still extremely high.

From 2008-2012, the overall IMR for Wagoner County was 5.6 deaths per 1,000 live births.<sup>8</sup> This rate is 25% lower than the state rate of 7.5 deaths per 1,000 live births<sup>8</sup> but is 4% higher than the county rate from 2002-2006.<sup>9</sup> The IMR in Wagoner County accounted for 1,875 years of potential life lost based on an average age of death in Oklahoma of 75 years.<sup>8</sup>

Receiving timely prenatal care is believed to reduce the risk of maternal and infant sickness and death as well as preterm delivery and low birth weight. From 2008-2012, 66.0% of women who had a live birth in Wagoner County accessed prenatal care during the first trimester of their pregnancy.<sup>26</sup>

Infant Mortality Rate by County, OSDH Vital Statistics, 2008-2012<sup>8</sup>



# Low Birth Weight

Low birth weight and preterm births together are the second leading cause of death among children less than 1 year of age.<sup>25</sup> Low birth weight infants are more at risk of health problems compared to infants born of normal weight, including infection, gastrointestinal problems, delayed motor and social development, and learning disabilities. Low birth weight infants may also be at higher risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease later in life.<sup>31</sup>

The percentage of Oklahoma babies born at low birth weight (i.e., weighing fewer than 5 pounds and 8 ounces, or 2500 grams) was 8.3% across 2008-2012.<sup>26</sup> This rate is similar to the latest national data (8.2% from 2007-2011).<sup>32</sup> In Wagoner County, the rate of low birth weight births was 7.3% from 2008-2012,<sup>26</sup> which is 4% lower than the rate from 2003-2007.<sup>26</sup>

As is seen with infant mortality, the percentage of low birth weight births is higher for Black/African American babies (14.1%) than babies of other races (White: 7.8%; American Indian: 7.3%; Asian/Pacific Island: 7.4%).<sup>26</sup>

Percent of Low and Very Low Birth Weight Births by County, OSDH Vital Statistics, 2008-2012<sup>26</sup>

