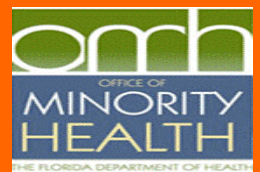


**A Healthy Baby Begins with You...  
A Healthy Baby Begins with  
All of US:  
Black Infant Mortality  
Press Conference**



**February 27, 2008  
10:30 am — 11:30 am  
Orange County Health  
Department  
Auditorium**

**Presented by:  
Orange County Health Department  
Office of Minority Health  
&  
Florida Department of Health  
Office of Minority Health**





Kevin Sherin, MD, MPH  
Director, Orange County Health Department



Emile Commedore, M.D., J.D., FACOG  
Director, State Office of Minority Health

## Dear Press Conference Attendee:

The death of a baby is disturbing regardless of race. Nevertheless, blacks are disproportionately affected. Last year, the black infant mortality rate for Orange County was 14.6 per 1,000 live births,\* significantly higher than the overall white infant mortality rate of 6.7 per 1,000 live births\*.

As directors of the Orange County Health Department and the State Office of Minority Health, we want to assure our community that we are committed to the reduction of black infant mortality in Orange County and Florida. We are optimistic that this is only one of many events to bring forth salient information and effective interventions that will save black babies. For that, we need the support of the entire community.

“A Healthy Baby Begins with You” campaign is the national black infant mortality campaign from the National Office of Minority Health, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We would like to echo that message in Orange County but we also want to add that “A Healthy Baby Begins with All of Us.”

As members of the media, your participation and support is essential as you are the source of information for the community. We need to let our community know that it is not acceptable for black babies to die in such large numbers; that we need to take collective action to reverse this trend. What can we do? Health researchers have identified the following nine risk factors that contribute to infant mortality: late prenatal care, smoking, substance abuse, poor nutrition, obesity, high stress, domestic violence, low maternal weight gain, and pre-term labor. By encouraging a change in these areas we can take a step in reversing these dire statistics.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Sherin, MD, MPH, FACPM  
Director  
Orange County Health Department

Emile C. Commedore, M.D., J.D., FACOG  
Director, Office of Minority Health  
Florida Department of Health

\*Source: Florida Department of Health, Community Health and Resource Tools (CHARTS)

# RACIAL/ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN INFANT HEALTH

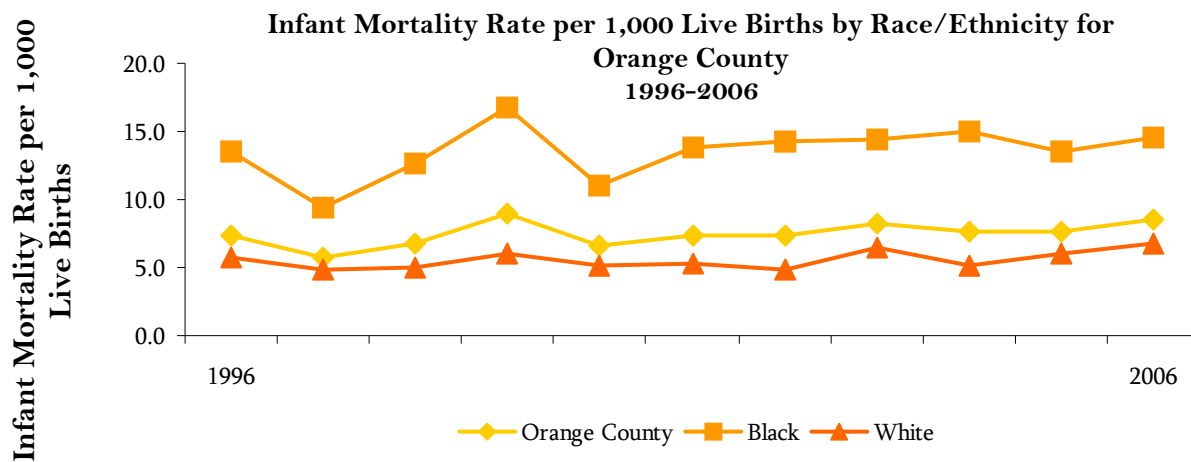
**INTRODUCTION:** In Orange County, infant health is a very important issue. For the past 10 years there were well over 10,000 births in Orange County each year, with about 25.0% of these births to black women. During this time, the number of infant deaths have ranged from 90 to 144 each year, with over 40.0% of these deaths being black babies. The following information outlines some of the determinants of infant health issues in Orange County.

## INFANT MORTALITY: Death from 0 to 364 days

**Overall:** The infant mortality rate in Orange County over the past 10 years has remained relatively flat. At 7.5 per 1,000 live births in 1996 and 8.5 per 1,000 live births in 2006.

**Racial/Ethnic Disparity:** The black infant mortality rate for the past 10 years has consistently been twice the rate of whites.

**Reduction Strategies:** Multifaceted approach which includes both pre, intra, and post-conceptual care for the mother and appropriate infant care.



## LOW BIRTHWEIGHT: Birth weight less than 5.5 pounds

**Overall:** Between 1996 (9.2%) and 2006 (9.4%), the percent of low birth weight babies born in Orange County has been consistent.

**Racial/Ethnic Disparity:** The percentage of low birth weight black babies is about 1.5 times greater than whites.

**Reduction Strategies:** Early entry into prenatal care and overall well-being of the mother.

## **TEEN BIRTHS: Mother Age 15-19**

**Overall:** From 1996 to 2006 the rate of births to teen mothers from 15 to 19 years of age has declined, from 58.3 in 1996 to 45.2 in 2006.

**Racial/Ethnic Disparity:** While the rate of teen births has decreased among both blacks and whites from 1996 to 2006, the teen birth rate for blacks each year is still about 1.5 times higher than that of whites.

**Reduction Strategies:** Age appropriate, gender specific pregnancy prevention intervention that includes both abstinence and safe sex messages.

## **EARLY PRENATAL CARE: First 3 months of pregnancy**

**Overall:** The percent of women entering into prenatal care during their first trimester in Orange County has slightly decreased from 1996 (85.3%) to 2006 (81.8%).

**Racial/Ethnic Disparity:** The percentage of early prenatal care entry for white women has been higher (87% to 91%) for the past 10 years than the percentage of blacks (72% to 81%).

**Reduction Strategies:** Increased access to care through community outreach activities. Recognition and reduction of language, transportation, and cultural barriers.

## **PRETERM BIRTHS: Less than 37 Weeks**

**Overall:** Between 1996 (14.4%) and 2006 (15.5%), the percent of preterm births in Orange County has increased about 7.0%.

**Racial/Ethnic Disparity:** From 1996 to 2006, about 1 in 5 (~20.0%) black births were preterm compared to about 1 in 7 (~14.0%) white births.

**Reduction Strategies:** Early entry into prenatal care and overall well-being of the mother.

**Compiled by the Orange County Health Department Office of Minority Health.**

**Data Source: Florida Department of Health, Community Health and Resource Tools (CHARTS)**

# TOWN HALL MEETING

## TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF OUR BABIES

**A Healthy Baby  
Begins with  
You!!!**



**A Healthy Baby  
Begins with All  
of Us!!!**

## SAVE THE DATE

**Where:**

Jones High School  
801 S. Rio Grande Ave  
Orlando, FL 32805

**When:**

June 9, 2008  
6:30 pm—8:30 pm

For more information, contact:  
Karen Johnson  
Orange County Health Department  
407-858-1400, ext. 1217

