

THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

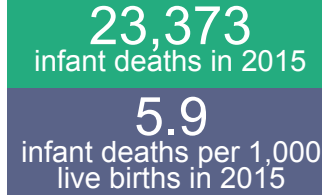
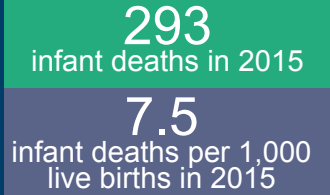
How many infants under age 1 are dying?<sup>1</sup>



Arkansas



United States



Where are infants dying most in Arkansas?<sup>2</sup>

Arkansas counties with **15-21** infant deaths per 1,000 live births between 2008-2012:



Lafayette



Newton

Arkansas counties with **10-15** infant deaths per 1,000 live births between 2008-2012:

- Baxter
- Bradley
- Crittenden
- Mississippi
- Montgomery
- Ouachita
- Perry
- Poinsett
- Prairie

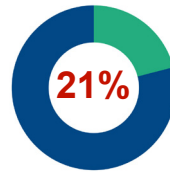
What risk factors influence infant mortality in Arkansas?<sup>3</sup>



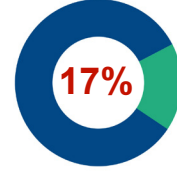
- Infants with birth weights less than 2.2 pounds
- Infants born at gestational age less than 28 weeks
- Infants with birth defects
- Twins, triplets, or higher multiple births
- Lack of prenatal care
- Medical complication during pregnancy
- Pregnant women under age 19 and over age 40
- Race (African Americans are at greater risk)
- Smoking during pregnancy
- Marital status

Why are infants dying?<sup>4</sup>

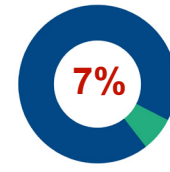
## Top 5 Causes of Infant Deaths in the United States in 2015



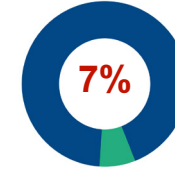
Birth Defects



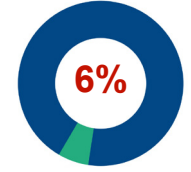
Pre-term Birth/  
Low Birth Weight



Sudden Infant Death  
Syndrome (SIDS)



Maternal  
Complications of  
Pregnancy



Unintentional  
Injuries

ADDRESSING INFANT MORTALITY: ARKANSAS

**Act 1818 of 2005** created the Arkansas Infant and Child Death Review Program to “improve the response to infant and child fatalities, provide accurate information on how and why Arkansas children are dying, and ultimately reduce the number of preventable infant and child deaths by establishing an effective review and standardized data collection system for all unexpected infant and child deaths.”<sup>5</sup>

**Sisters United** is a community-based initiative established in 2012 as a partnership between the Arkansas Department of Health and African American sororities to decrease infant mortality in Arkansas. The four main focus areas include safe sleep practices, breastfeeding, folic acid consumption, and flu shots.<sup>6</sup>

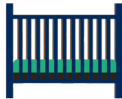
**Arkansas Birthing Project** connects women to volunteer mentors who provide practical support during pregnancy and during the infant’s first year of life. The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and Arkansas Birthing Project are also developing a mobile app to give mentors on-demand access to educational materials.<sup>7</sup>

As part of the **Arkansas Health Care Payment Improvement Initiative**, the Arkansas Department of Human Services Medicaid program led the implementation of the perinatal episode of care to ensure a healthy pregnancy and follow-up care. The initiative improves quality and incentivizes providers to manage all of the pregnancy-related care. Participating providers must meet quality metrics that aim to increase pregnancy screenings as a preventative measure to reduce high-risk pregnancies.<sup>8</sup>

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

How can infant mortality be prevented?<sup>9</sup>



- Improve breastfeeding rates (a priority area of Healthy Active Arkansas, a governor-endorsed plan to combat obesity).
- Promote safe sleep practices such as not sharing the same sleep surface, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. 
- Promote healthy behaviors and chronic condition prevention to improve preconception health.
- Increase prenatal care, such as taking folic acid.
- Reduce early elective deliveries (<39 weeks) through public and private education and policies.

**South Carolina Birth Outcomes Initiative** is a policy of non-payment for early elective deliveries in 2012, resulting in a 50% reduction, adopted by the South Carolina Medicaid agency and largest commercial insurers.<sup>10</sup>

**Baby Box Program** is a program in which New Jersey, Ohio, and Alabama partnered with the Baby Box Co. to distribute free baby boxes to expecting parents beginning in 2017.<sup>11</sup>

**Safe Sleep Program** is a pilot program in Ohio created to reduce infant mortality by training Youngstown first responders to look out for unsafe infant sleep. First responders who see an unsafe sleep environment will give parents an information card to connect them to Cribs for Kids, a national program offering free Pack 'n' Plays ® for pregnant women and new mothers.<sup>12</sup>

**California Home Visiting Program** is a program created by the Affordable Care Act that provides comprehensive and coordinated services for families living in at-risk communities. Expectant parents are paired with trained professionals who provide parenting information, resources, and support during pregnancy and throughout the child's first years using evidence-based home visiting models.<sup>13</sup>

- Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC). (2017, January 4). Infant mortality rates by state. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/infant\\_mortality\\_rates/infant\\_mortality.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/infant_mortality_rates/infant_mortality.htm)
- University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture. (2015). Rural profile of Arkansas. Retrieved from <https://www.uaex.edu/publications/pdf/MP-531.pdf>
- Arkansas Department of Health (ADH). (2012 March). From data to action: a background paper on infant mortality in Arkansas. Retrieved from [https://www.arkmed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Data\\_to\\_Action\\_Nugent\\_2012.pdf](https://www.arkmed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Data_to_Action_Nugent_2012.pdf)
- Xu, J., Murphy, S. L., Kochanek, K. D., & Arias, E. (2016 December). Mortality in the United States, 2015. NCHS Data Brief, (267): p. 1-8.
- Arkansas Infant and Child Death Review Program and Injury Prevention Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital. (2012 June). Arkansas infant child death review program annual report: fiscal year 2011-2012. Retrieved from <http://www.archildren.org/media/file/ICDR%20annual%20report-2012.pdf>
- Sisters United. Retrieved from [http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/licensing\\_docs/SistersUnitedBrochure.pdf](http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/licensing_docs/SistersUnitedBrochure.pdf)
- Arkansas Matters. (2016, October 11). UAMS reasearch team gets \$325,000 to develop app for mentors to help reduce infant deaths. Retrieved from <http://www.arkansasmatters.com/news/local-news/uams-research-team-gets-325000-to-develop-app-for-mentors-to-help-reduce-infant-deaths/593917099>
- Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI). (2017 May). 3<sup>rd</sup> annual statewide tracking report may 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.achi.net/Docs/482/>
- Hirai, A.H. et al. (2014 March). Contributors to excess infant mortality in the U.S. south. American Journal of Preventative Medicine, 46(3), 219-227. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2013.12.006
- South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. South Carolina birth outcomes initiative dramatically improves infant health, saves millions of dollars. Retrieved from <https://www.scdhhs.gov/press-release/south-carolina-birth-outcomes-initiative-dramatically-improves-infant-health-saves>
- Milian, G. (2017, March 27). Free baby boxes welcomed in fight against sleep-related deaths. ABC News. Retrieved from <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/free-baby-boxes-welcomed-fight-sleep-related-deaths/story?id=46398998>
- Bercik, J. (2017, March 14). WKBN 27 News. Program trains first responders to look out for unsafe infant sleep. Retrieved from <http://wkbn.com/2017/03/14/program-trains-first-responders-to-look-out-for-unsafe-infant-sleep/>
- Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health Division. (2015 September). A high-yield investment in stronger families: California home visiting program. Retrieved from <https://archive.cdph.ca.gov/programs/mcah/Pages/HVP-HomePage.aspx>