

RESOLUTION

Promoting Infant Mortality Awareness, Education, and Prevention

WHEREAS, infant mortality refers to the death of a baby before his or her first birthday and the birth of a healthy baby is an important indicator for community health; and

WHEREAS, the South Carolina infant mortality rate was 7.4 infant deaths per every 1,000 live births in 2010 with congenital malformations/deformations, prematurity/low birth weight and sudden infant death syndrome as the leading causes of infant deaths (Division of Biostatistics, DHEC); and

WHEREAS, higher infant mortality rates are especially prevalent among women less than 18 years of age, women that do not begin prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy, and African American women, whose infant mortality rate is twice that of white women; and

WHEREAS, the South Carolina infant mortality rate remains higher than the latest reported US infant mortality rate of 6.75 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2007 and has the 46th highest infant mortality rate in the US (National Center for Health Statistics); and

WHEREAS, while there have been reductions in the overall state infant mortality rate in the past 20 years, there is still much work to be done to address the factors that contribute to infant mortality and to assure that mothers have early access into a continuous system of medical care; and

WHEREAS, support for community based programs to reduce infant mortality can result in lower future spending on medical interventions, special education, and other social services as well as reduce parental suffering that occurs with the death of an infant; and

WHEREAS, statewide efforts to improve infant mortality have been ongoing through various partnerships using best practice recommendations including 1) community based services such as outreach, home visitation, and case management; 2) preconception and interconception education and care; 3) educational campaigns focused on safe infant sleeping practices; 4) folic acid supplementation to prevent neural tube defects; 5) systems to ensure that high-risk infants are delivered at appropriate hospitals; and 6) ongoing management of chronic diseases that can lead to greater infant mortality risk.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the South Carolina Public Health Association in conjunction with maternal and child health advocates across the state urges the South Carolina Legislature to enact and the Governor to sign legislation that will support best practice recommendations and programs and services to reduce infant deaths, low birth weight, pre-term births and disparities in perinatal outcomes.

Approved this 23rd day of May, 2012

Larry A. White

Larry A. White, President
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