

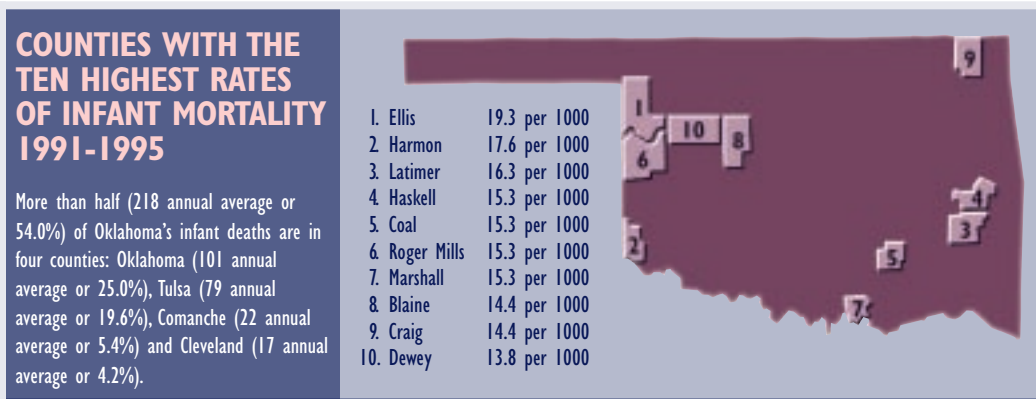
Each year, four hundred Oklahoma babies (404 annual average) do not live to see their first birthday; instead they die from health problems, birth complications, birth defects, poverty, living conditions, injuries, inadequate care, infections, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and more.

On the average, one Oklahoma infant dies every day.

Although Oklahoma's rate of infants who die in their first year of life decreased slightly (8.8 to 8.7 deaths per 1,000 live births) during this past year, rates worsened in more than half (44 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties during the same period.

Today, proportionately fewer Oklahoma babies (8.7 per 1,000) die in their first year of life than did in the mid-1980s (10.4 per 1,000), with such rates also improving in the large majority (57 of 77) of Oklahoma counties during the same period.

The highest infant death rate (19.3 per 1,000) is found in Ellis County; the lowest (0.0 per 1,000) is in Major County.



### Talking Points:

According to the World Health Organization, the infant mortality rate reflects the effectiveness of economic, social and health care measures. It is often regarded as an indicator of a community's overall quality of life.

Low birthweight and infant mortality are related. The infant mortality rate can be predicted with reasonable accuracy from the proportion of babies with low birthweight.

Lowering infant mortality rates requires providing education, nutrition services and appropriate health care, reducing risk factors (such as poverty) and changing behavior during pregnancy to reduce smoking, drinking and drug use.

The death rate for African American infants (15.3 per 1,000) worsened during the most recent year and is almost twice as high as the rate for White infants (8.1 per 1,000).

Oklahoma's infant mortality ranking relative to other states slipped from 33<sup>rd</sup> to 36<sup>th</sup> during the most recent year (1994) measured.

