Impact on Oklahoma

▶ *Unforgiving circumstances prematurely terminate the lives of defenseless Oklahoma infants.* Causes of death range from birth complications and birth defects to poverty and inadequate living conditions to abuse and inadequate care to accidents and infections.

▶ *The infant mortality rate is an indicator of a community's overall quality of life.* The rate reflects the effectiveness of economic, social and health care interventions.

Each year nearly four hundred babies born in Oklahoma (393 annual average) do not live to see their first birthday.

On the average at least one Oklahoma infant dies every day.

Although Oklahoma's rate of infants who die in their first year of life decreased (8.7 to 8.5 deaths per 1,000 live births) during this past year, rates worsened in nearly half (37 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties during the same period.

The decline in infant death rates has continued for years. Today, proportionately fewer Oklahoma babies (8.5 per 1,000 live births) die in their first year of life than did in the mid-1980s (10.4 per 1,000 live births), with such rates also improving in the large majority (55 of 77) of Oklahoma counties during the same period.
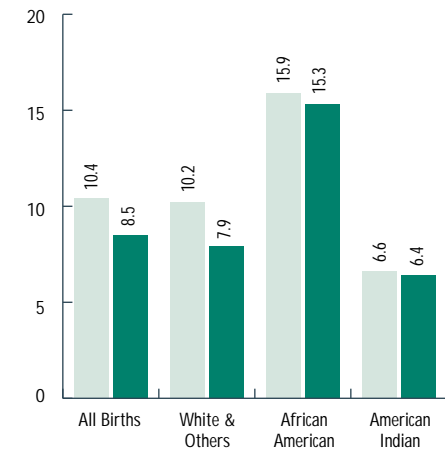
The rates of infant death in a majority of Oklahoma counties (42 of 77) were better than the average county rate (8.3 per 1,000 live births). During this most recent period, the highest and worst infant death rate (18.0 per 1,000 live births) is found in Haskell County; the lowest and best (0.0 per 1,000 live births) is in Major County.

The death rate for African American infants (15.3 per 1,000 African American births) is almost twice as high as the rate for White infants (8.1 per 1,000 White births). The best death rate is recorded for American Indian infants (6.4 per 1,000 American Indian births).

Ranking in the bottom half of all the states, Oklahoma's rate of infant death is only fair relative to other parts of the country. Oklahoma's national rank remained at 36th during the most recent year (1995) measured.

Infant Deaths
Average Annual Rate Per 1000 Births, By Race, Oklahoma 1983-87 & 1992-96

Legend: 1983-87 / 1992-96

▶ *Low birthweight and infant mortality are related.*
The infant mortality rate can be predicted with
reasonable accuracy from the proportion of babies
born very small.

▶ *Improving the outcomes.* Lowering infant mortality
rates requires providing education, ensuring
adequate nutrition, reducing teen births, providing
appropriate health care, reducing poverty and
changing behavior during pregnancy to reduce
smoking, drinking and drug use.

Infant Mortality
Five-Year Average Annual Rate of Deaths per 1000
Live Births; Oklahoma: 1992-96, State Rate: 8.5 per 1000
Live Births, Average of County Rates: 8.3 per 1000 Live Births

Nearly half (175 per year or 44.5%) of the infant deaths
occurred where mothers lived in one of the state's two large
metropolitan counties (Oklahoma or Tulsa County) which
together account for just under forty percent (39.8%) of
Oklahoma's births and are populated with just under forty
percent (38.1%) of Oklahoma's infants.

☐ 10 Best Counties

☐ Above Average

☐ Below Average

☐ 10 Worst Counties

Map data (Five-Year Average Annual Rate of Deaths per 1000 Live Births):

Cimarron 5.5
Texas 8.0
Beaver 3.1
Harper 10.5
Woods 4.5
Alfalfa 7.9
Grant 7.4
Kay 10.1
Osage 5.8
Washington 6.6
Nowata 6.2
Craig 11.9
Ottawa 4.6
Ellis 14.5
Woodward 7.4
Major 0.0
Garfield 8.9
Noble 4.5
Pawnee 9.2
Rogers 4.4
Mayes 10.4
Delaware 7.6
Dewey 15.2
Blaine 13.3
Kingfisher 4.9
Logan 7.6
Payne 7.3
Tulsa 6.9
Wagoner 6.2
Cherokee 5.3
Adair 10.1
Roger Mills 16.9
Custer 7.5
Canadian 5.3
Oklahoma 9.7
Lincoln 8.8
Creek 9.3
Okmulgee 9.0
Muskogee 8.0
Sequoyah 7.4
Beckham 10.8
Washita 8.1
Caddo 9.8
Cleveland 6.7
Pottawatomie 10.2
Seminole 8.3
Okfuskee 8.5
McIntosh 10.7
Haskell 18.0
LeFlore 6.0
Harmon 17.2
Greer 3.2
Kiowa 3.4
Grady 7.0
McClain 5.9
Hughes 6.5
Pittsburg 10.0
Latimer 16.9
Jackson 6.5
Comanche 9.4
Garvin 5.3
Pontotoc 8.8
Coal 10.1
Atoka 10.9
Pushmataha 6.0
Tillman 5.8
Cotton 8.8
Stephens 8.9
Murray 10.4
Johnston 9.5
Choctaw 7.2
McCurtain 9.0
Jefferson 6.0
Carter 8.3
Marshall 10.8
Bryan 5.9
Love 4.0