



NOVEMBER IS PREMATURE AWARENESS MONTH

Worldwide, preterm birth is the leading cause of death in newborns less than 28 days old.¹ Rates of premature births are continuing to climb in the United States, with 1 in 10 babies being born before 37 weeks gestation.² While Kansas fell slightly below the nationwide prematurity rate in 2021, at 9.8% vs 10.5%, it did not meet the Healthy People 2030 goal of 9.4%.³ Moreover, large disparities continue to exist.

DISPARITIES IN KANSAS

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a survey in which women who have recently given birth are interviewed about their health and experiences before, during, and shortly after pregnancy. 2017 – 2019 PRAMS data indicates significant disparities known to be associated with poor health outcomes, including preterm birth. These socioeconomic disparities were observed across a wide range of indicators, including unintended pregnancy, timing of prenatal care initiation, cigarette smoking, stress experienced in the year before the birth, breastfeeding for at least eight weeks, postpartum depressive symptoms, and indicators related to infants' sleep habits. In addition, racial disparities persist. For instance, non-Hispanic Black women had a higher prevalence of self-reported gestational hypertension, preeclampsia, or eclampsia; unintended pregnancy; and partner-related stress in the year before the birth; compared to non-Hispanic White women.⁴

PREVALENCE OF PRETERM BIRTH IN KANSAS



Race

Non-Hispanic Black mothers gave birth to a preterm infant 45% more often than those of other races.



Health Insurance

Preterm birth was higher among women who reported Medicaid as their primary health insurance during pregnancy, compared to private insurance or those who were uninsured. (11.0% Medicaid, 6.6% Private, 5.6% No insurance).



Smoking

Preterm birth was higher among women who reported smoking in the last three months of pregnancy, compared to those who did not (12.3% smoked vs 7.3% who did not).

Self-Reported Health Conditions During Pregnancy:



Gestational Diabetes

12.8% of women with gestational diabetes experienced preterm birth, compared to 7.4% of women without gestational diabetes.



Pregnancy-Onset Hypertension, Preeclampsia or Eclampsia

26% of women with pregnancy-onset hypertension, preeclampsia or eclampsia experienced preterm birth, compared to 5.2% of women without these conditions.



Depression

11% of women with depression experienced preterm birth, compared to 7.1% of women without depression.



Anxiety

10.8% of women with anxiety experienced preterm birth, compared to 6.8% of women without anxiety.

COVID-19 & PRETERM BIRTH

COVID-19, even in mild cases, is associated with increased instances of preterm birth.⁵ Risk of very preterm birth, which occurs at less than 32 weeks of gestation, was 60 percent higher for people infected with COVID-19 at some point in their pregnancy, while the risk of giving birth at less than 37 weeks (all preterm births) was 40 percent higher in those with infection. For those who also had hypertension, diabetes and/or obesity as well as COVID-19, the risk of preterm birth rose 160 percent. These findings emphasize the importance of COVID-19 vaccination for people who are pregnant or may become pregnant to protect both the mother and the infant.⁶

IMPACT OF PREMATURITY

Prematurity can cause problems for babies throughout their lives. The earlier a baby is born, the more likely they are to have health problems.⁶

Some long-term effects for babies associated with preterm birth include:

- Cerebral palsy
- Neurological disorders
- Asthma
- Bronchopulmonary dysplasia
- Hearing loss
- Dental problems
- Infections
- Intestinal problems caused by necrotizing enterocolitis
- Vision problems associated with retinopathy of prematurity
- Long-term behavioral problems and mental health challenges

OUR ROLE AS HEALTH EDUCATORS

As health care providers and health educators, we know the importance of quality education and accessible health care and resources for the families we serve. Providing Kansas families with affordable, comprehensive, and accessible opportunities for prenatal care is paramount to battling rising prematurity rates. Additionally, women should receive frequent, quality appointments with their providers who practice compassionate, patient-centered, holistic care that encourages, educates, and supports families in making healthy decisions. Please join us in observation of World Prematurity Month throughout November and World Prematurity Day on November 17.

RESOURCES

Infographics

- [Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait](#) by March of Dimes
- [Signs and Symptoms of Preterm Labor](#) by March of Dimes
- [Protect Yourself and Your Baby from COVID-19](#) by CDC

National Toolkits

- [COVID-19 Toolkit for Pregnant People](#) by CDC
- [IMPLICIT \(Interventions to Minimize Preterm and Low birth weight Infants using Continuous Improvement Techniques\) Toolkit](#) by March of Dimes
- [Prematurity Awareness Toolkit](#) by March of Dimes
- [Go the Full 40 Campaign Toolkit](#) by the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)
- [World Prematurity Day 2023 Campaign Materials](#) by Healthy Newborn Network

Public Health Strategies to Prevent Preterm Birth

- [CDC Public Health Grand Rounds](#)
- [Archived Presentation](#)

For Providers

- [Kansas Perinatal Quality Collaborative](#)
- [Gestational Age Designations for Health Care Providers](#) by National Institutes of Health
- [Infant Mortality Prevention Toolkit](#) by National Institute for Children's Health Quality
- [Kansas Perinatal Psychiatric Consultation Line](#) provides no-cost resource and referral support and psychiatric consultations
- [Pregnant and Protected Campaign Materials](#) by CDC Foundation

For Patients/Clients

- [Signs and Symptoms of Preterm Labor](#) by March of Dimes
- [Preterm Birth FAQs for Women and Their Families](#) by CDC
- [Smoking, Pregnancy, and Babies](#) by CDC
- [Go the Full 40](#) by AWHONN and Healthy Mom & Baby Magazine
- [Douglas and Improved Birth Outcomes Impact Statement](#) by March of Dimes
- [Pregnant and Protected from COVID-19](#) by CDC Foundation

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS



1



2



1) Disparities in Kansas/Disparidades en Kansas

In Kansas, Black mothers are 45% more likely to have a preterm birth than women of other races. Call your doctor right away and or seek immediate medical attention if you suspect preterm labor. Learn more about the signs and symptoms of preterm labor at marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/birth/signs-and-symptoms-preterm-labor-infographic.

#PrematurityAwarenessMonth

En Kansas, las madres afroamericanas tienen un 45% más de probabilidades de tener un parto prematuro que las mujeres de otras razas. Llame a su médico de inmediato o busque atención médica inmediata si sospecha de un parto prematuro en: marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/birth/signs-and-symptoms-preterm-labor-infographic. #PrematurityAwarenessMonth

2) Steps Toward Health & Managing Stress During Pregnancy/Pasos hacia la salud y manejo del estrés durante el embarazo

While there are many things during pregnancy that you can't control, there are some things you can do to give your baby the best start at life. Get vaccinated against Covid-19 and influenza, take a prenatal vitamin with folic acid, and minimize stress when you can. A few stress management ideas are: take a short walk, spend time outside in sunshine, take a long shower, or try some simple breathing exercises. Talk with your provider if you are struggling to cope with stressors.

#PrematurityAwarenessMonth

Aunque hay muchas cosas durante el embarazo que no puede controlar, hay algunas cosas que puede hacer para dar a su bebé el mejor comienzo en la vida. Vacúnese contra el Covid-19 y la gripe, tome una vitamina prenatal con ácido fólico y minimice el estrés siempre que pueda. Algunas ideas para controlar el estrés son: dar un pequeño paseo, pasar tiempo al aire libre bajo el sol, darse una larga ducha o probar algunos ejercicios sencillos de respiración. Hable con su proveedor si tiene dificultades para afrontar los factores de estrés. #PrematurityAwarenessMonth

3) Prenatal Care/Cuidado prenatal

Getting early, regular prenatal care is one of the most important things you can do for you and your baby. Regular health care visits can reduce your risk of having your baby prematurely, which can have long-term impacts on your baby's health and wellness. Some insurance plans can even help you with transportation to and from your appointments! Find out more about available plans or apply for coverage through KanCare.ks.gov or HealthCare.gov. #PrematurityAwarenessMonth

Recibir atención prenatal temprana y regular es una de las cosas más importantes que puede hacer por usted y por su bebé. Las visitas regulares de atención médica pueden reducir el riesgo de tener un bebé prematuro, lo que puede tener efectos a largo plazo en la salud y el bienestar de su bebé. ¡Algunos planes de seguro pueden incluso ayudarlo con el transporte de ida y vuelta a sus citas! Averigüe más sobre los planes disponibles o solicite cobertura a través de KanCare.ks.gov o HealthCare.gov. #PrematurityAwarenessMonth

4) Quit – It’s Worth It!/Deje de fumar - ¡Vale la pena!

Did you know that the Kansas Tobacco Quitline has a special, free program designed specifically to help pregnant moms quit? Tobacco use in pregnancy has been linked to premature births for babies, which can lead to undeveloped lungs and brain functioning. Babies born prematurely can have difficulties feeding, breathing, and even trouble with their eyesight and hearing. Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your baby – and yourself. Free resources are available for anyone who wants to quit using tobacco products. Visit ksquit.org or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for 24/7 support.

#PrematurityAwarenessMonth

¿Usted sabía que Kansas Tobacco Quitline tiene un programa especial gratuito diseñado específicamente para ayudar a las madres embarazadas a dejar de fumar? El consumo de tabaco en el embarazo se ha vinculado a los nacimientos prematuros de los bebés, lo que puede llevar a que los pulmones y el funcionamiento del cerebro no se desarrollen. Los bebés que nacen prematuramente pueden tener dificultades para alimentarse, respirar e incluso problemas de vista y oído. Dejar de fumar es una de las mejores decisiones que puede hacer por su bebé y por usted misma. Hay recursos gratuitos disponibles para cualquier persona que quiera dejar de consumir productos de tabaco. Visite: ksquit.org o llame al 1-855-DÉJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569) para obtener asistencia las 24 horas del día, los 7 días de la semana. #PrematurityAwarenessMonth

5) The Last Weeks Matter! ¡Las últimas semanas importan!

While the last few weeks of pregnancy can feel as though they last forever, they are essential to the health of your baby! In a typical, healthy pregnancy, waiting to deliver until you’re past the 39 week mark can help ensure that your baby’s lungs and brain are fully developed and can help avoid complications caused from a premature delivery. #PrematurityAwarenessMonth

¡Aunque las últimas semanas del embarazo pueden parecer eternas, son esenciales para la salud de su bebé! En un embarazo típico y saludable, esperar a dar a luz hasta que se haya superado la marca de la semana 39 puede ayudar a garantizar que los pulmones y el cerebro de su bebé estén completamente desarrollados y puede ayudar a evitar complicaciones causadas por un parto prematuro. #PrematurityAwarenessMonth



¹World Health Organization. (n.d.). *New recommendations from WHO to help improve the health of preterm infants*. World Health Organization. Retrieved October 3, 2022, from <https://www.who.int/news/item/30-09-2022-new-recommendations-from-who-to-help-improve-the-health-of-preterm-birth>

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, November 1). *Preterm birth*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternalinfanthealth/pretermbirth.htm#:~:text=Preterm%20birth%20is%20when%20a,2019%20to%2010.1%25%20in%202020>.

³March of Dimes. (n.d.). *Preterm birth rate: Kansas, 2010-2020*. March of Dimes | PeriStats. Retrieved November 8, 2023, from <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/data?reg=99&stop=60&sreg=20&top=3&obj=1>

⁴2019 Surveillance Report - KDHE, KS. (n.d.). Retrieved October 3, 2022, from <https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/716>

⁵Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, August 9). *CDC articles and key findings from set-net data*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/set-net/articles.html#:~:text=An%20analysis%20of%20more%20than,deliveries%20were%20preterm%20in%202019>.

⁶*Covid-19 during pregnancy associated with preterm birth*. COVID-19 During Pregnancy Associated with Preterm Birth | UC San Francisco. (2022, November 17). Retrieved November 21, 2022, from <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2021/08/421181/covid-19-during-pregnancy-associated-preterm-birth#:~:text=Risk%20of%20very%20preterm%20birth,higher%20in%20those%20with%20infection>.