



NOVEMBER IS PREMATURE AWARENESS MONTH

#PREMATURITYAWARENESSMONTH

2024

Worldwide, preterm birth is the leading cause of death in newborns less than 28 days old.¹ In 2022, rates of premature births continued to climb in the United States, with 1 in 10 babies being born before 37 weeks gestation.² While Kansas slightly surpassed the nationwide prematurity rate in 2022, at 10.5% vs. 10.4%, it also did not meet the Healthy People 2030 goal of 9.4%.³ Moreover, large disparities continue to exist.

DISPARITIES IN BIRTH OUTCOMES

The Kansas Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) is a survey in which Kansas residents who have recently given birth are interviewed about their health and experiences before, during, and shortly after pregnancy. According to the most recent PRAMS report, in 2017-2021, significant disparities persisted by 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 infants' sleep safety.⁴ In addition, racial disparities persist. For instance, non-Hispanic Black birthing persons 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 birthing persons.⁴

PREVALENCE OF PRETERM BIRTH IN KANSAS (2019-2021)



Race

Preterm birth was most common among infants born to birthing persons of non-Hispanic Black race (14.2%) or non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander race (14.7%).



Payment Source

Preterm birth was more common among infants whose deliveries were paid for by Medicaid (11.8%), than for infants whose deliveries were indicated as being paid for by other types of health insurance (9.1%) or self-paid/uninsured (9.1%).



Age

Advanced maternal age (35 years or older) was associated with a higher rate of preterm births.

COVID-19 AND 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 PREMATUREITY

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

Awareness Campaigns

- [IMPLICIT \(Interventions to Minimize Preterm and Low Birth Weight Infants Using Continuous Improvement Techniques\) Toolkit](#) by March of Dimes
- [Prematurity Awareness Month](#) 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 2024 Campaign Materials](#) by Healthy Newborn Network

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

For Providers

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

For Families

- [COVID-19 Information for Pregnant or Breastfeeding People](#) by CDC
- [Signs and Symptoms of Preterm Labor](#) by March of Dimes
- [Preterm Birth Information](#) by CDC
- [Preterm Labor and Birth FAQs](#) by ACOG
- [Smoking, Pregnancy, and Babies](#) by CDC
- [Go the Full 40](#) by AWHONN and Healthy Mom & Baby Magazine
- [Doula and Improved Birth Outcomes Position Statement](#) by March of Dimes
- [Pregnant and Protected from COVID-19](#) by CDC Foundation

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Click the images to download and use to spread awareness about Prematurity Awareness Month on your social media. The images are high quality and are free to download for non-commercial use only.



1) Disparities in Kansas/Disparidades en Kansas

The preterm birth rate among babies born to Black birthing people is 1.4 times higher than the rate among all other babies. 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

La tasa de nacimientos prematuros entre los bebés nacidos de madres afroamericanas es 1,4 veces más alta que la tasa entre todos los demás bebés. Llame a su médico de inmediato o busque atención médica inmediata si sospecha que se trata de un parto prematuro. Aprenda más sobre los signos y síntomas del parto prematuro en nacersano.marchofdimes.org/parto-y-nacimiento/infografia-de-las-senales-del-parto-prematuro.aspx. #PrematurityAwarenessMonth

2) Steps Toward Health and 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. marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/pregnancy/stress-and-pregnancy #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. nacersano.marchofdimes.org/embarazo/estres.aspx #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 ayudarle 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 cuidadodesalud.gov/es. #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: kansas.quitlogix.org/es-es 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.

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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. marchofdimes.org/find-support/topics/birth/why-least-39-weeks-best-your-baby #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. nacersano.marchofdimes.org/parto-y-nacimiento/por-que-llegar-al-menos-a-las-39-semanas-es-lo-mejor-para-su-bebe.aspx #PrematurityAwarenessMonth



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3. MarchofDimes. (n.d.). *Preterm birth rate: Kansas, 2012-2022*. March of Dimes | PeriStats. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from marchofdimes.org/peristats/data?reg=99&stop=60&sreg=20&top=3&obj=1.
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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 ucsf.edu/news/2021/08/421181/covid-19-during-pregnancy-associated-preterm-birth#:~:text=Risk%20of%20very%20preterm%20birth,higher%20in%20those%20with%20infection.