



# From Questions to Solutions Infant Mortality in Cuyahoga County

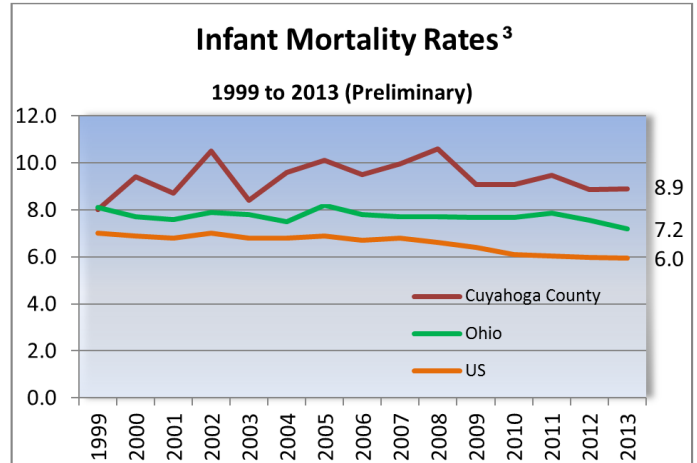
An Overview Prepared by the Office of Early Childhood -- Invest in Children

## WHAT IS INFANT MORTALITY?

An infant death is any death of a baby born alive that occurs prior to the child's first birthday. Deaths due to any cause are included. Fetal deaths are not included.

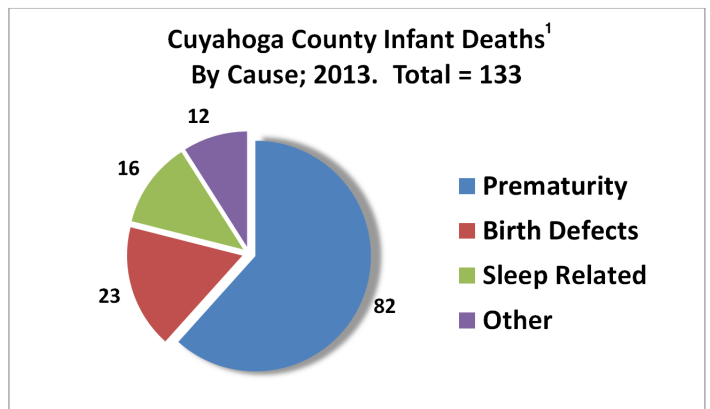
## HOW MANY BABIES DIE EACH YEAR?

133 babies died in Cuyahoga County in 2013<sup>1</sup>. The number of babies who die is expressed as a rate per 1000 live births. For Cuyahoga County the rate for 2013 was 8.9. A rate that has remained relatively flat for 15 years. Ohio ranks 47th<sup>2</sup> in the nation for infant mortality, and within Ohio, Cuyahoga ranks among the worst of those counties with a large number of births.



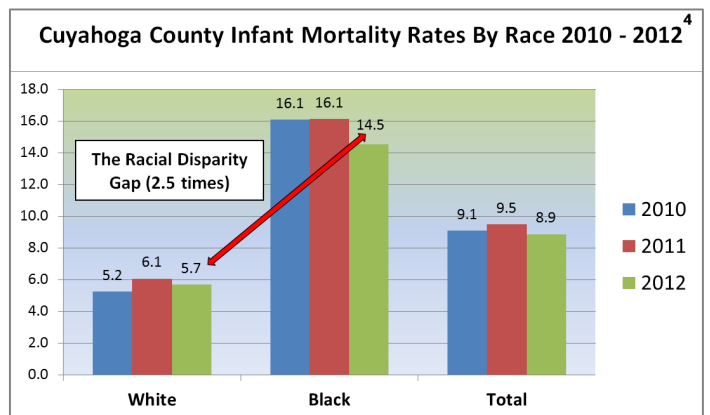
## WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY CAUSES?

In 2013, premature birth, birth defects and sleep related deaths comprised 91 percent of infant deaths<sup>1</sup>. Underlying contributing factors include maternal health and socioeconomic conditions that include smoking, obesity, chronic personal stress, poverty-induced instability, and lack of stable social support. The 12 deaths shown as "Other" had causes that included: homicide and various medical conditions. In some years, auto accidents and other injuries are experienced.



## WHO IS MOST AFFECTED?

All racial and socioeconomic groups experience infant deaths. However, for reasons that are only partly understood, African American babies die at a rate much higher than that of other racial groups, even when considering education and economic status differences.



## ARE THESE DEATHS PREVENTABLE?

Many could be. Babies born with certain serious birth defects cannot always be saved. For the others, prevention opportunities do exist, but have proven difficult to fully realize. Safe Sleep initiatives help educate parents, but changing behavior so that evidenced-based guidelines are consistently followed, has proven to be more difficult than the simplicity of the guidelines would suggest.





## “From Questions to Solutions”

### *Invest in Children Supported Programs Working to Reduce Infant Mortality*

The Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood funds near and long-term efforts to fight infant mortality and improve overall early childhood well-being and school readiness.

#### **Near-Term Solutions Supporting Pregnant Women and New Families**

The pregnancy and newborn period offer a valuable opportunity to influence the health of a baby and support the family environment responsible for his or her care, nurturing, safety and psycho-social development. There is no more immediate time period within which there is a direct opportunity to prevent infant death and morbidity.

● **MomsFirst** -- Case management and home visiting services to pregnant and new moms offered by the Cleveland Department of Public Health, and funded through a \$2,000,000 annual federal grant. Women receive health education on topics such as prenatal care, breastfeeding, family planning, and interconception care; as well as transportation assistance. In 2013, the program served nearly 2,000 families, and achieved a seven-year averaged infant mortality rate of 6.9 -- or 26 percent below the rate for Cuyahoga County as a whole.

*Invest in Children Annual Commitment: \$349,239*

● **Bright Beginnings** -- Home visiting services using the evidenced-based curriculum *Parents as Teachers*. Serves children infancy through age 5. Visits to families with new babies include developmental screenings, parenting and health care information, and early learning activities. In 2014, 725 families, representing 928 children were provided services. Of these children 96 percent had up-to-date immunizations, and over 95 percent had a Medical Home. A full program evaluation is underway.

● **Newborn Home Visiting** -- One-time nurse home visit to support healthy infant development. In 2014, 1,429 families on Medicaid with new babies were served, and received developmental screenings, home environmental surveys for hazards, and health care information. In more than 75 percent of these newborns, the nurse identified at least one physical health issue and addressed it. Home safety concerns were identified in 55 percent of visits.

*Invest in Children Annual Commitment: \$457,062*

#### **Long-Term Solutions Improving the Social Determinates of Health**

Many of the underlying modifiable risk factors for infant mortality have their origins many years before pregnancy -- often beginning in the parent's early childhood. It is possible to influence and reduce these risk factors.

A 2013 report by The World Health Organization concluded “*the economic and health-related returns on school-age interventions, particularly those targeting early education, far outweigh the costs.*”

#### ● **Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)**

An affordable, comprehensive, voluntary, high-quality preschool program located at sites around the county. The program builds upon existing preschool programs in private and public preschools, as well as family child care homes, to enhance their quality and makes this high-quality preschool affordable through tuition assistance to families under 400% of poverty. Serves 2,300 young children annually. A recent evaluation done by CWRU showed that UPK students who entered Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) kindergarten showed an average level of school readiness significantly higher than the average of all children entering CMSD.

*Invest in Children Annual Commitment: \$4,750,000*

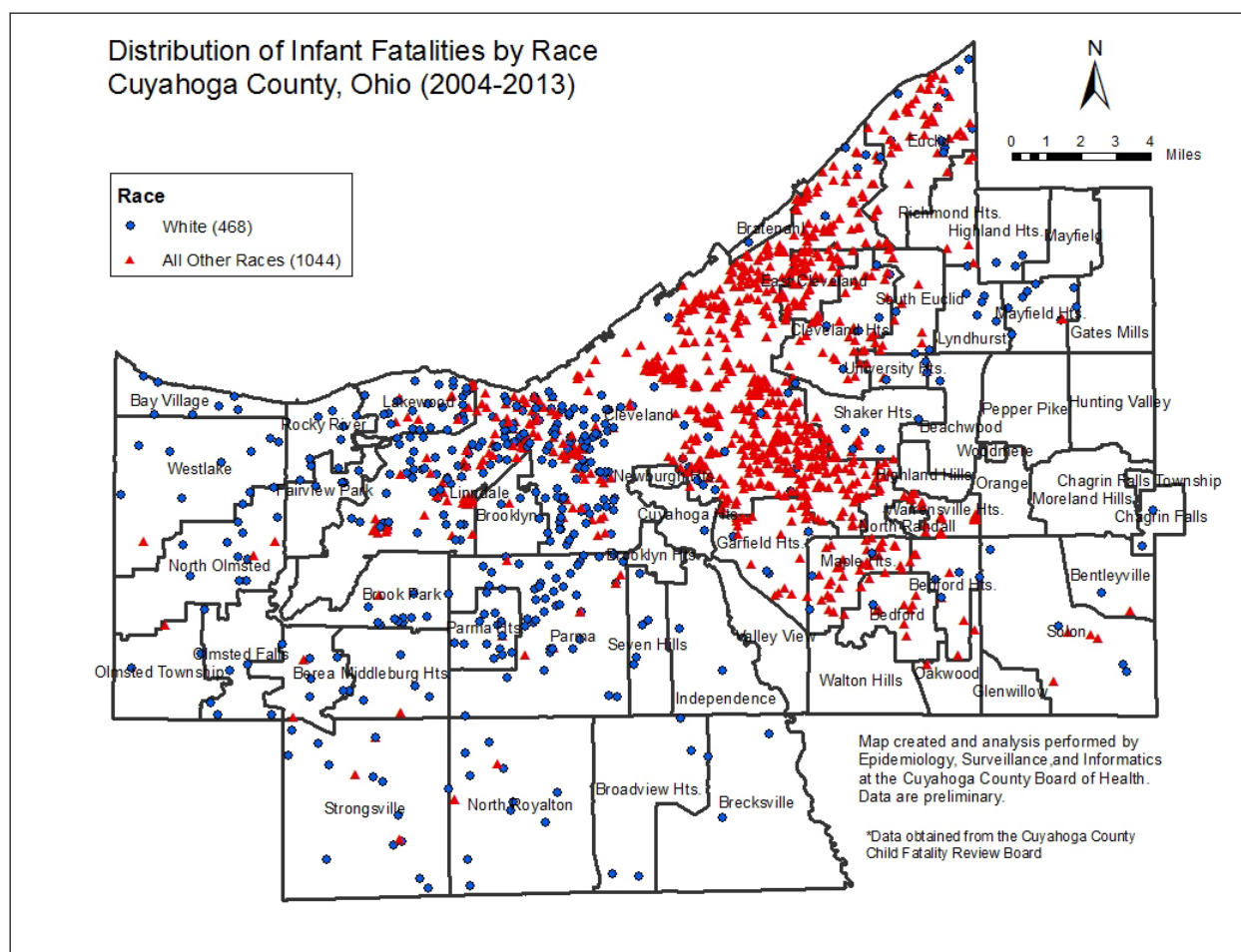
#### ● **Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH)**

Provides clinical services to children ages 0 through 6 who are in need of mental health services. ECMH includes the promotion of healthy social and emotional development, the prevention and early intervention of mental health difficulties, and the treatment of mental health conditions among very young children in the context of their families. In 2014, the program provided consultation and treatment services to 1,027 clients.<sup>5</sup>

*Invest in Children Annual Commitment: \$941,696*

## Community Efforts and Collaboratives Supported by Invest in Children Involvement

Program Name	Lead Agency	Strategies Employed	Office of Early Childhood Involvement
Cleveland/Cuyahoga Partnership to Improve Birth Outcomes	Cuyahoga County Board of Health	Funding of evidenced-based strategies based on wide community collaboration in priority selection and implementation.	Active participant in all aspects of program planning, implementation and evaluation.
Ohio Birth Equity Institute	Ohio Department of Health	Statewide collaborative effort working to share best practices, coordinate opportunities for collaboration, and help drive effective public policy around infant mortality.	Active participant in all aspects of program planning, implementation and evaluation. Served on planning committee and as a Presenter at recent statewide Summit on Infant mortality.
Cuyahoga County Child Fatality Review Committee	Cuyahoga County Board of Health (Under DHHS Contract)	Detailed case review and analysis to document deaths for state requirements and develop useful prevention recommendations.	Participates in case review of most child deaths in the county, and all infant sleep related deaths.



**Citations / Footnotes:**

1. Cuyahoga County Child Fatality Report, Seventeenth Edition, 2014
2. Ohio Department of Health, OCPIIM Presentation, Arthur James, MD; 2013
3. Compiled from multiple sources, including: Ohio Department of Health, Cuyahoga County Board of Health.
4. Ohio Department of Health; Office of Vital Statistics.
5. Some clients move from consultation to treatment, so the number indicated contains some duplication.