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Public Health
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SHELBY COUNTY INFANT MORTALITY RATE REACHES HISTORIC MILESTONE

MEMPHIS, TN – The Shelby County Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in 2015 was 8.2 deaths per 1,000 live births, the lowest ever recorded in Shelby County, TN.

"We have made significant improvements and are encouraged by the decreased rate," said Alisa Haushalter, DNP, RN, director of the Shelby County Health Department. "We will continue to collaborate with all partners; partners who work tirelessly to ensure all babies not only live to celebrate their first birthday but thrive in a healthy community."

The IMR, the rate at which babies die before their first birthday, is complex and results from a variety of contributing factors throughout the course of the mother's life--before, during and between pregnancies. Reductions in the number of infant deaths are the result of improvements in early access to care, minimizing health risks, increasing breastfeeding rates as well as other education and outreach efforts.

"I'm pleased to see the drop in the infant mortality rate in Shelby County," said Shelby County Mayor Mark H. Luttrell, Jr. "I commend the staff at the Shelby County Health Department and so many of our community partners. Their educational programs about healthy lifestyles have certainly assisted many mothers and their children at this critical time in their lives.

In Shelby County, the leading causes of infant deaths are primarily associated with birth defects, low-weight births, maternal complications from pregnancy, prematurity and Sudden Unexplained Infant Deaths.

The largest decline in 2015 was in the rate of infant deaths among non-Hispanic Blacks, which went from 21.0 in 2003 to 10.6. Although Blacks experienced a significant decline in the number and rate, they continue to disproportionately experience infant deaths.

The national IMR target established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through Healthy People 2020 is 6.0 deaths per 1,000 live births, and Shelby County is headed in the right direction.

Mission

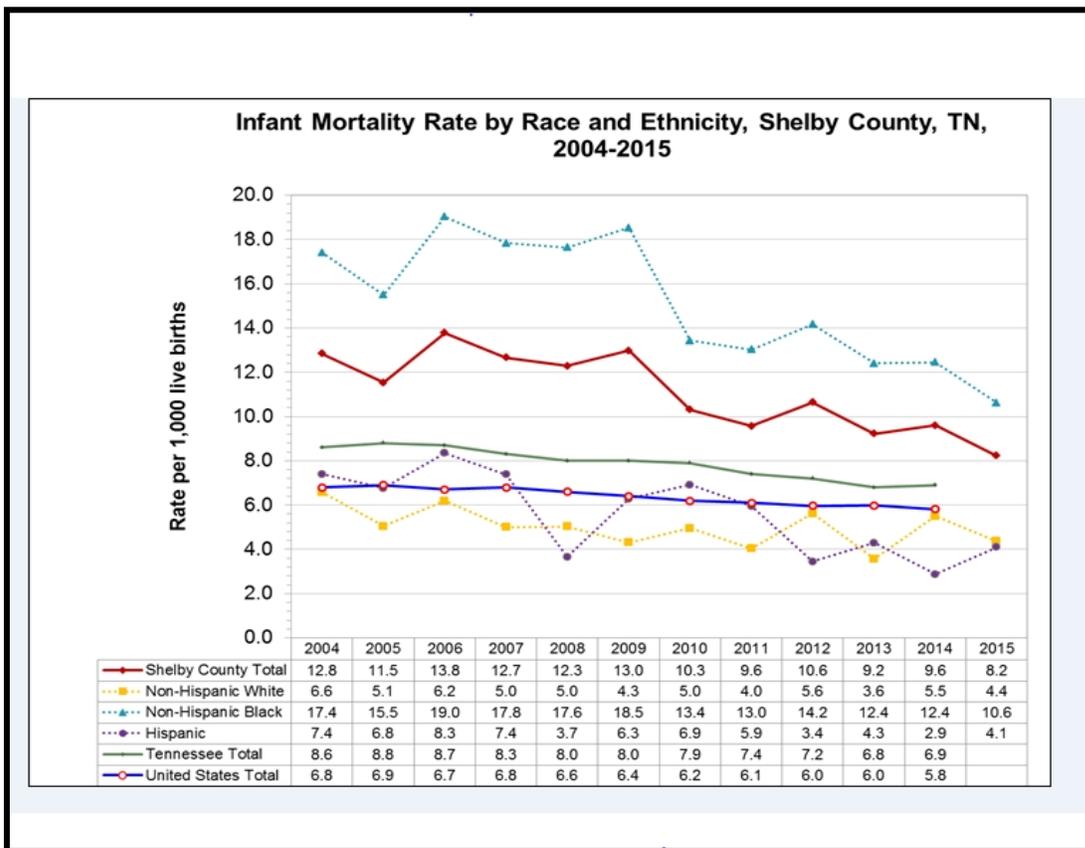
To promote, protect and improve the health and environment of all Shelby County residents.

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Families are encouraged to do the following before, during and after a pregnancy:

- Plan the pregnancy and talk to a healthcare provider;
- Be tobacco-free;
- Take a daily dose of folic acid (400 mcg);
- Begin prenatal care within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy;
- Know the ABCs of Safe Sleep: Babies should sleep ALONE, on their BACK and in a CRIB.

For more information and resources, go to the Shelby County Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative blog at www.shelbycountyimri.wordpress.com.



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