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Infant mortality and stillbirth rates serve as critical indicator of community health

The KIDS Network continues intervention efforts to reduce the numbers.

(Wichita, Kan.) – The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Bureau of Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics, reports that the rate of Kansas infant deaths in 2022, which includes newborns through one year of age, was 5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births, while the nationwide infant mortality rate was 5.5 per 1,000 live births. The Kansas infant mortality rate was also higher than the Healthy People 2030 objective of no more than 5.0 deaths per 1,000 live births. Furthermore, the rate of stillbirth in Kansas, which includes the death or loss of a baby before or during delivery, increased in 2021 to 5.6 and in 2022 to 5.9 per 1,000 total deliveries. Additionally, disparities persist in both categories, with Black infants dying at two to three times the rate of their Caucasian counterparts, and the Hispanic rates are rising.

The high infant mortality and stillbirth rates in Kansas serve as a critical indicator of our community's overall health, and it remains alarmingly high despite progress over the past decade. Addressing the root causes of infant mortality and stillbirth, which include inadequate prenatal care, education levels, stress, and economic instability, requires a unified and dedicated community effort. The KIDS Network with partners from Safe Kids Kansas are committed to raising awareness and collaborating with community partners to continue intervention efforts and protect the lives of our youngest and most vulnerable population.

The KIDS Network is a non-profit agency serving individuals who have been touched by the tragedy of infant death or SIDS in Kansas, in addition to, those individuals or organizations who strive to reduce the risk of infant deaths by providing supportive services, community education, professional training and supporting associated research.

Characteristics of the sleep-related deaths in Kansas

- 96% had one or more elements of unsafe sleep
- 76% were not sleeping in a crib/bassinet
 - 84% of whom had a crib or bassinet in the home
- 60% were sleeping in an adult bed
 - 73% of whom were co-bedding
- 4% were sleeping on a couch, while co-bedding
- 52% were documented as not being placed on the back to sleep (recommended position)
- 72% were less than 4 months old

(source: State Child Death Review Board 2021 Annual Report <http://bit.ly/2zwopGB>)