

Infant Mortality Awareness
Fill-in-the-Blank Press Release for Local Use



For Release _____, 2014

Contact: (Insert name and phone number)

Oklahoma's Infant Mortality Rate Continues to Decline

Officials are encouraged by the improvement in Oklahoma's infant mortality rate (IMR). The IMR is the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Even with the improvement in IMR, premature birth continues to be a leading cause of infant mortality and morbidity (sickness) in Oklahoma. Premature birth is defined as a birth occurring before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy. Factors that may contribute to premature birth are a short time period between pregnancies, smoking, obesity, and high stress. Premature birth may result in the baby having problems with breathing, infections, and often leading to admission to the neonatal intensive care unit.

In an effort to increase awareness and offer steps each of us can take to help reduce infant mortality, community leaders are urged to recognize September as *Infant Mortality Awareness Month*.

Policymakers, health care providers, community leaders, parents, grandparents, neighbors, clergy, and others can be involved in ways to help all babies born in Oklahoma get the best possible start in life. Steps that can be taken include:

- Encouraging and supporting a woman's healthy choices
- Planning for pregnancy and being healthy before and between pregnancies, including being at a healthy weight
- Taking 400 mcg of folic acid daily to help reduce chances of having a baby with birth defects
- Quitting smoking and providing a smoke-free environment for baby
- Getting tested and treated, if needed, for sexually transmitted diseases
- Having a full-term pregnancy (about 40 weeks)
- Knowing the signs and getting help for postpartum depression
- Placing baby on his or her back to sleep
- Making sure the baby sleeps in his or her own crib or bassinet, instead of your bed
- Breastfeeding baby and supporting a woman's choice to breastfeed
- Keeping your cool when baby will not stop crying and never shaking a baby
- Watching baby at all times and never leaving a baby unattended

Our [organization/church/community group name] is hosting [insert activity] on [date] at [insert location]. For more information, including date and time, please call [insert name and contact information].

To learn more about what steps *YOU* can take to help ensure the health and safety of Oklahoma's babies, and to download relevant information, visit the *Preparing for a Lifetime, It's Everyone's Responsibility* web pages at <http://iio.health.ok.gov> under Free Materials and Resources.

To obtain wallet-size resource cards with health tips, helpful websites and telephone numbers, email Janette Cline at janettec@health.ok.gov.