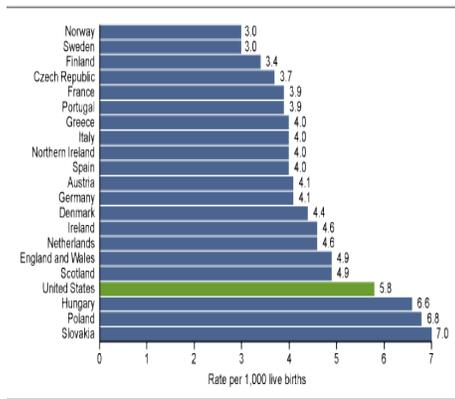


# BLACK BABIES MATTER: FIGHTING INFANT MORTALITY RATES IN BLACK AMERICA

**Infant mortality** is the death of an infant before his or her first birthday.

In 2017, the infant mortality rate (IMR) in the United States was 5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births.

The IMR is a national indicator of the overall health a society, and despite technological advancements, the U.S IMR is exceptionally high when compared to other developed countries.



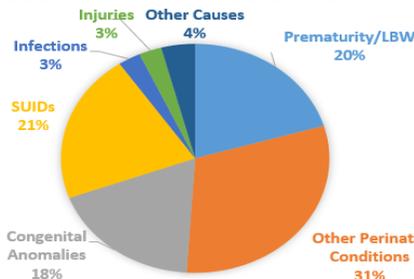
## Causes of Infant Mortality

Over 22,000 infants died in the United States in 2017.

The five leading causes of infant death in 2017 were:

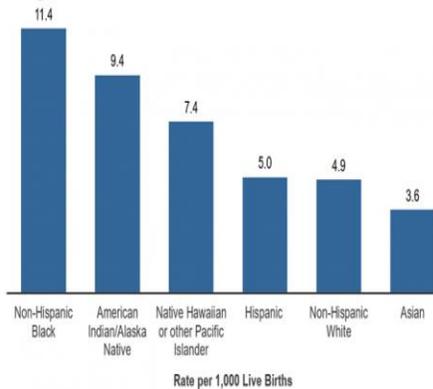
- Birth defects.
- Preterm birth and low birth weight.
- Maternal pregnancy complications.
- Sudden infant death syndrome.
- Injuries (e.g., suffocation)

## 2018 INFANT CAUSES OF DEATH



## Racial Disparities in IMR

African Americans have 2.2 times the infant mortality rate as non-Hispanic whites.



African American infants:

- are 3.2 times as likely to die from complications related to low birthweight
- had over twice the sudden infant death syndrome mortality rate

when compared to non – Hispanics whites.

African American mothers were 2.2 times more likely than non-Hispanic white mothers to receive late or no prenatal care.



## Contributing Factors to High IMR in African Americans

1. Racial and Socioeconomic stress (allostatic load)
2. Structural racism and poorer quality health care
3. Obesity and inadequate nutrition

## Policy Recommendations:

- Ensure dissemination of best shared practices and coordination amongst maternal and infant mortality review committees
- Improve access to culturally competent care throughout the care continuum
- Expand Medicaid coverage to new mom's entire post-partum period

## Current Legislation

- 2014: The Sudden Unexpected Death Data Enhancement and Awareness Act – enables patterns of infant death to become clearer to better prevent these deaths.
- 2018: Improving Access to Maternity Care Act – works to identify areas lacking maternal health care professionals and provide incentives for providers practicing in those areas.
- 2019: MOMMA Act (Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness) – promotes nationwide awareness of holistic health care to women before and after pregnancy.

## Conclusion

Racial disparities need to be addressed to improve the IMR and to improve the overall health of the country.

This includes more federal legislation geared to improving maternal health care, eliminating racism and discrimination in health delivery, and incorporating comprehensive health care to African American before, during, and after birth.

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