

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 17, 2013

**Contact:** Office of Communications  
(850) 245-4111

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH MAKES HEALTHY PREGNANCY A PRIORITY**

**TALLAHASSEE** – The Department of Health (DOH) Office of Vital Statistics release of infant mortality data last month revealed a decrease in 2012 infant mortality rates from 6.4 in 2011 to 6.0 in 2012 per 1,000 live births, marking a new low for Florida's infant mortality rate.

"The Department of Health is committed to helping expectant mothers in every community across our state have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "The decrease in infant mortality rates this year is an indication that our hard work is paying off."

Infant mortality must be addressed through a multifaceted approach. The DOH's four priority strategies for reducing infant mortality are: emphasize the importance of being healthy prior to pregnancy; promote early and regular prenatal and infant care; promote placing a baby to sleep on his or her back, alone in a crib or other safe sleep environment; and address health factors contributing to racial disparities in infant mortality.

Florida's Healthy Start program is designed to improve maternal and infant health outcomes by providing universal risk screening of all of Florida's pregnant women and newborn infants to identify those at risk of poor birth, health, and developmental outcomes. Local Healthy Start Coalitions mobilize community action, coordinate risk-appropriate services and referrals for pregnant women and infants at risk for poor health outcomes.

Black infant mortality rates decreased from 12.0 in 2011 to 10.7 in 2012. The white infant mortality rate decreased from 4.9 in 2010 to 4.6 in 2011 and remained at 4.6 in 2012. The Hispanic infant mortality rate decreased slightly from 5.2 per 1,000 live births in 2011 to 5.1 in 2012. While the black infant mortality rate was at an historic low point, these rates continued to show a disparity at 10.7 per 1,000 live births compared to the white infant mortality rate of 4.6 per 1,000 live births.

The 2012 Vital Statistics birth and death statistics are published on the Florida CHARTS web site at <http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/DataViewer/InfantDeathViewer/InfantDeathViewer.aspx?indNumber=0053>.

DOH protects, promotes and improves the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at @HealthyFla and on Facebook. For news story ideas, interviews, videos and more from DOH Communications visit the DOH Online Newsroom.

###

**Florida Department of Health**

Office of Communications  
4052 Bald Cypress Way Bin A04 • Tallahassee, FL 32399  
PHONE: 850-245/4111 • FAX 850/488-6495

**www.FloridasHealth.com**

TWITTER: HealthyFLA  
FACEBOOK: FLDepartmentofHealth  
YOUTUBE: fldoh