



Oral Health and Prenatal
Care Go Hand in Hand

Alabama...finally FIRST!



ORAL HEALTH OFFICE
Promoting Smiles Across a Lifetime

**ALABAMA
PUBLIC
HEALTH**

The Alabama Department of Public Health Office of Oral Health is excited to partner with *Healthy Birth Day, Inc.*, to engage the Alabama dental community in the *Count the Kicks* program, an evidence-based stillbirth prevention campaign – developed in Iowa.

Alabama is the *first* state aside from Iowa to launch a pilot program bridging oral health care during the third trimester of pregnancy and stillbirth prevention. It is our intent, through this interdisciplinary approach, to improve healthy birth outcomes and reduce Alabama's high fetal death rate. Tremendous gratitude is extended to all who have contributed to this partnership.



ORAL HEALTH OFFICE

Promoting Smiles Across a Lifetime

ALABAMA
**PUBLIC
HEALTH**



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Presenters

Objectives

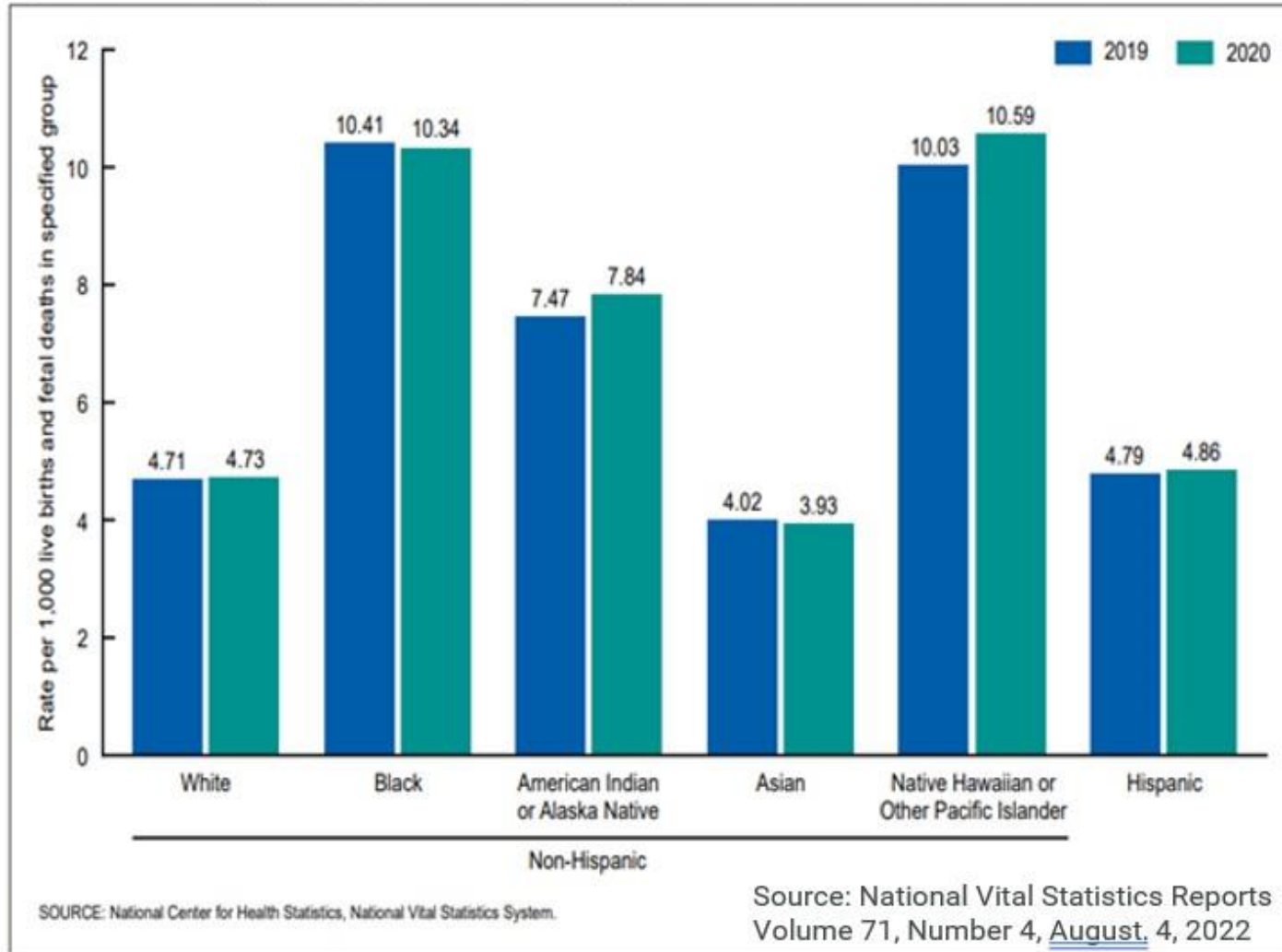
- ▶ Overview of the Link Between Stillbirth & Maternal Mortality and Morbidity
- ▶ Understand the importance of integrating equity and inclusion into your workflow and learning the difference between cultural competency and cultural humility
- ▶ Discuss innovative strategies that can be used to reduce Stillbirth & Maternal Mortality and Morbidity in dental settings
- ▶ Learn how to download and use the *Count the Kicks* app
- ▶ Learn how to have a kick-counting conversation with expectant patients
- ▶ Learn how to BEST utilize the free tools and resources
- ▶ Learn how to incorporate *Count the Kicks* into the clinic workflow and documentation
- ▶ Review testimonies from expectant parents and learn how the *Count the Kicks* tools and resources help save their babies

Definitions and Facts

- ▶ Miscarriage: a miscarriage is usually defined as loss of a baby before the 20th week of pregnancy
- ▶ Stillbirth: a stillbirth is loss of a baby after 20 weeks of pregnancy.
 - ▶ Stillbirth is further classified as either early, late, or term.
 - ▶ An **early** stillbirth is a fetal death occurring between 20 and 27 completed weeks of pregnancy.
 - ▶ A **late** stillbirth occurs between 28 and 36 completed pregnancy weeks.
 - ▶ A **term** stillbirth occurs between 37 or more completed pregnancy weeks.
 - ▶ On average 23,500 babies are born still ever year in the US.
- ▶ Infant Mortality: death of an infant before his or her first birthday.
 - ▶ On average around 22,000 infants die every year in the US.
- ▶ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/stillbirth/facts.html>

2019 & 2020 CDC Stillbirth Rates by Race

Figure 2. Fetal mortality rates, by race and Hispanic origin of mother: United States, 2019 and 2020

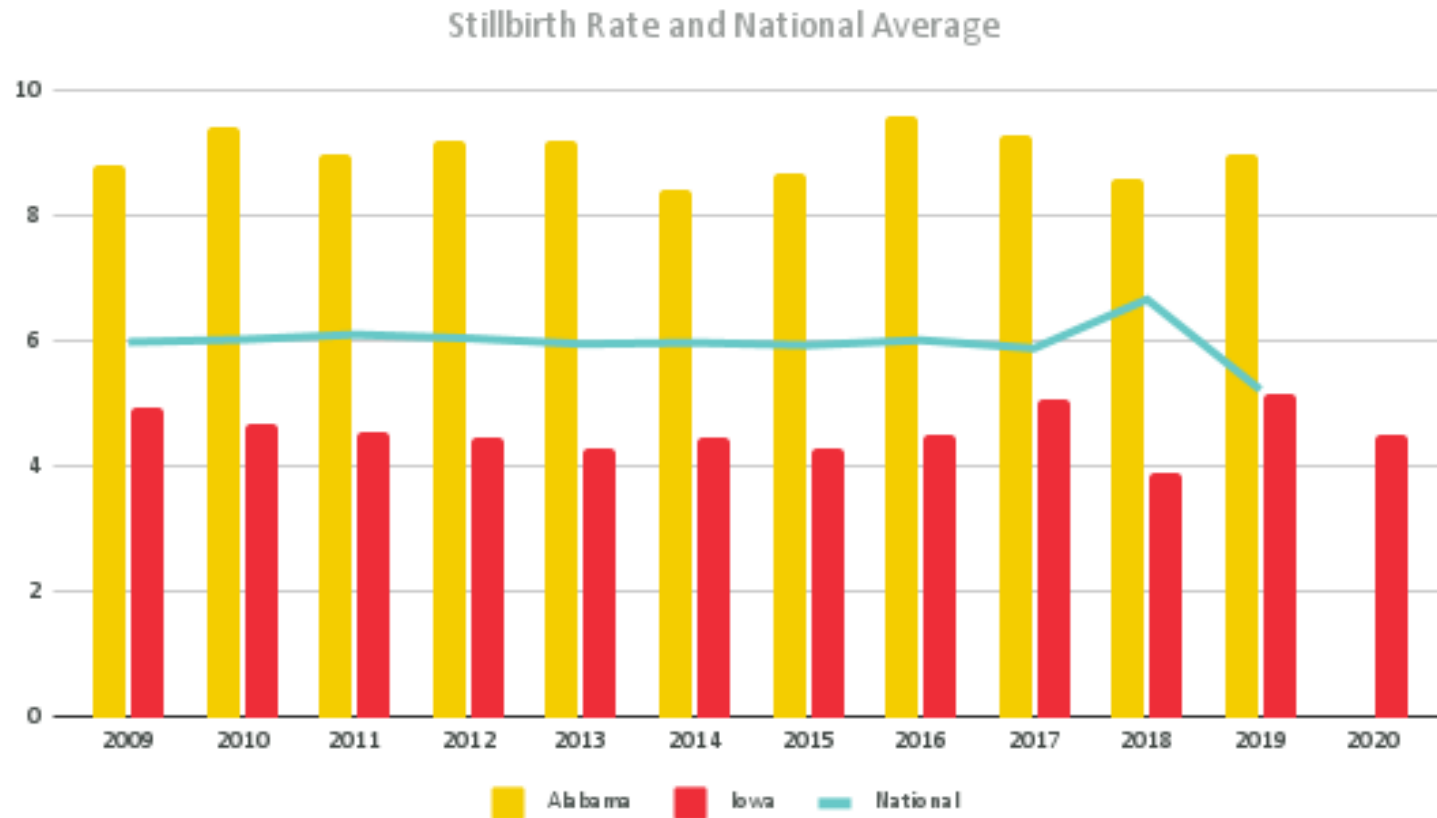


Additional Stillbirth Facts:

- ✓ The U.S. fetal mortality rate was 5.74 fetal deaths at 20 weeks of gestation or more per 1,000 live births and fetal deaths in 2020, which was not significantly different from the 2019 rate of 5.70.
- ✓ Just as prevalent as infant mortality
- ✓ Families 10 times more likely to lose a baby to stillbirth than to SIDS
- ✓ The Covid-19 Pandemic has increased the urgency.

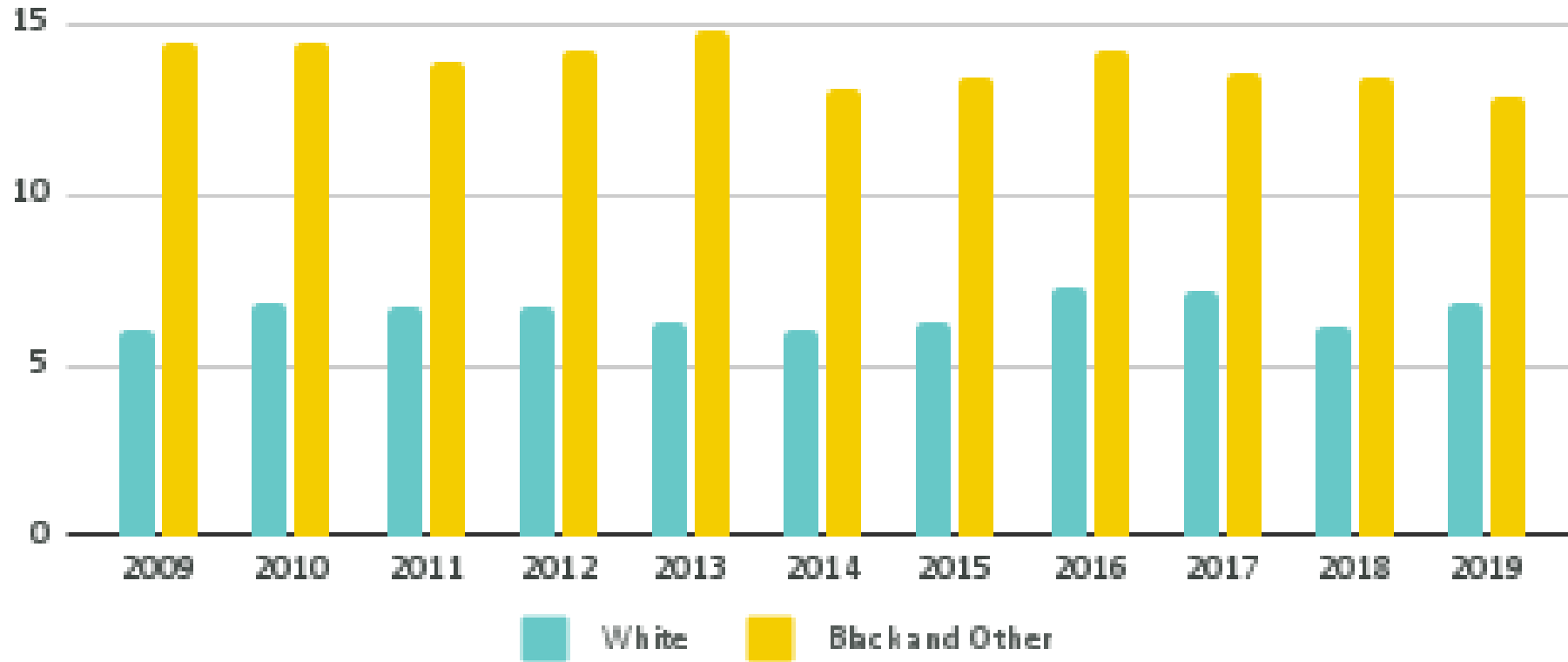
Alabama Data

Stillbirth Rate: 8.85 per 1,000 live births (5-year average)
1 out of 113 pregnancies in Alabama end in stillbirth
Alabama loses approximately 527 babies to stillbirth each year.



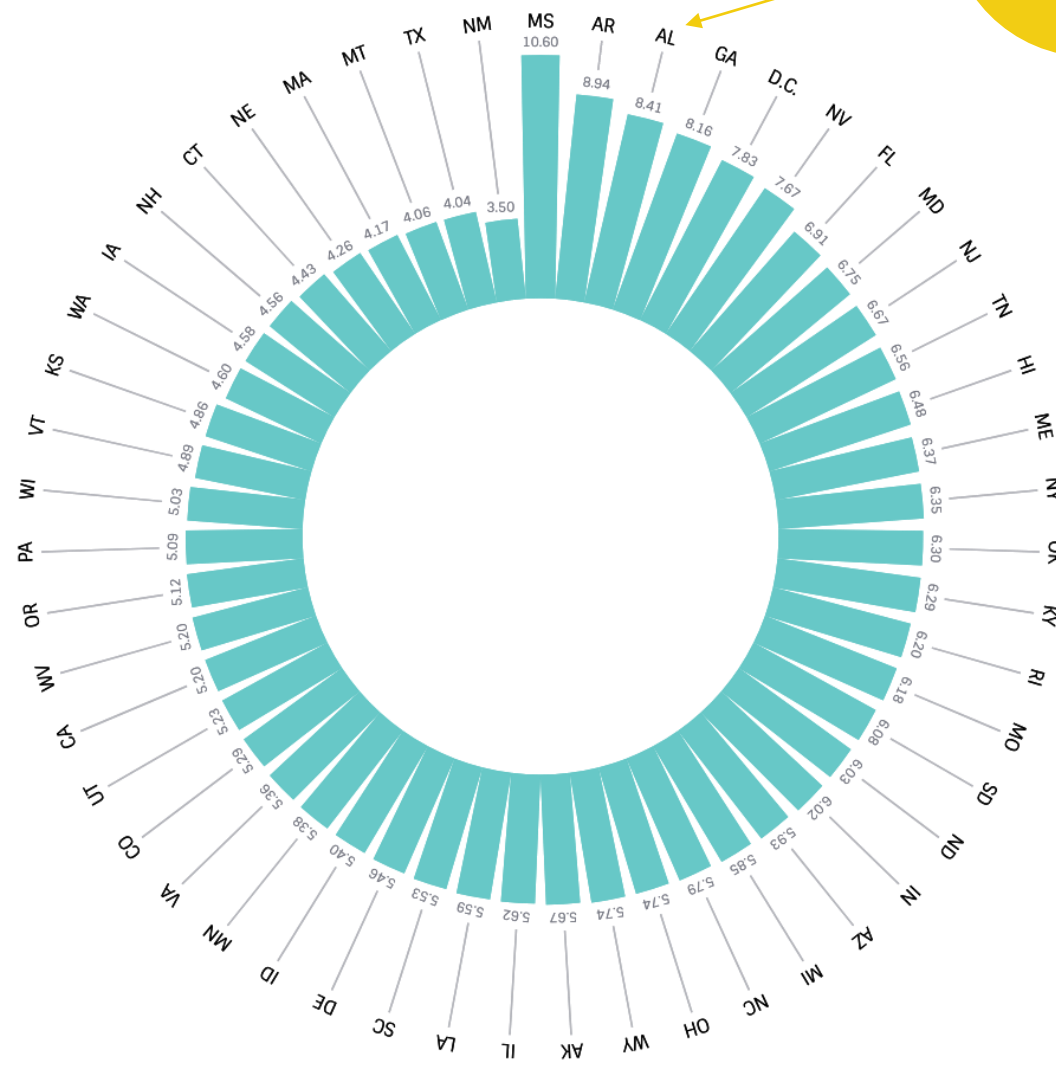
- All Alabama data is based on stillbirth data from Alabama Vital Statistics. Fetal deaths does not include abortions.
- US data is from CDC Wonder
- Iowa stillbirth data is from Iowa Vital Statistics, IDPH
- Stillbirth rate is calculated by: $Fetal\ Deaths / Total\ of\ Live\ Births + Fetal\ Deaths * 1,000$

Stillbirth Disparities in Alabama:

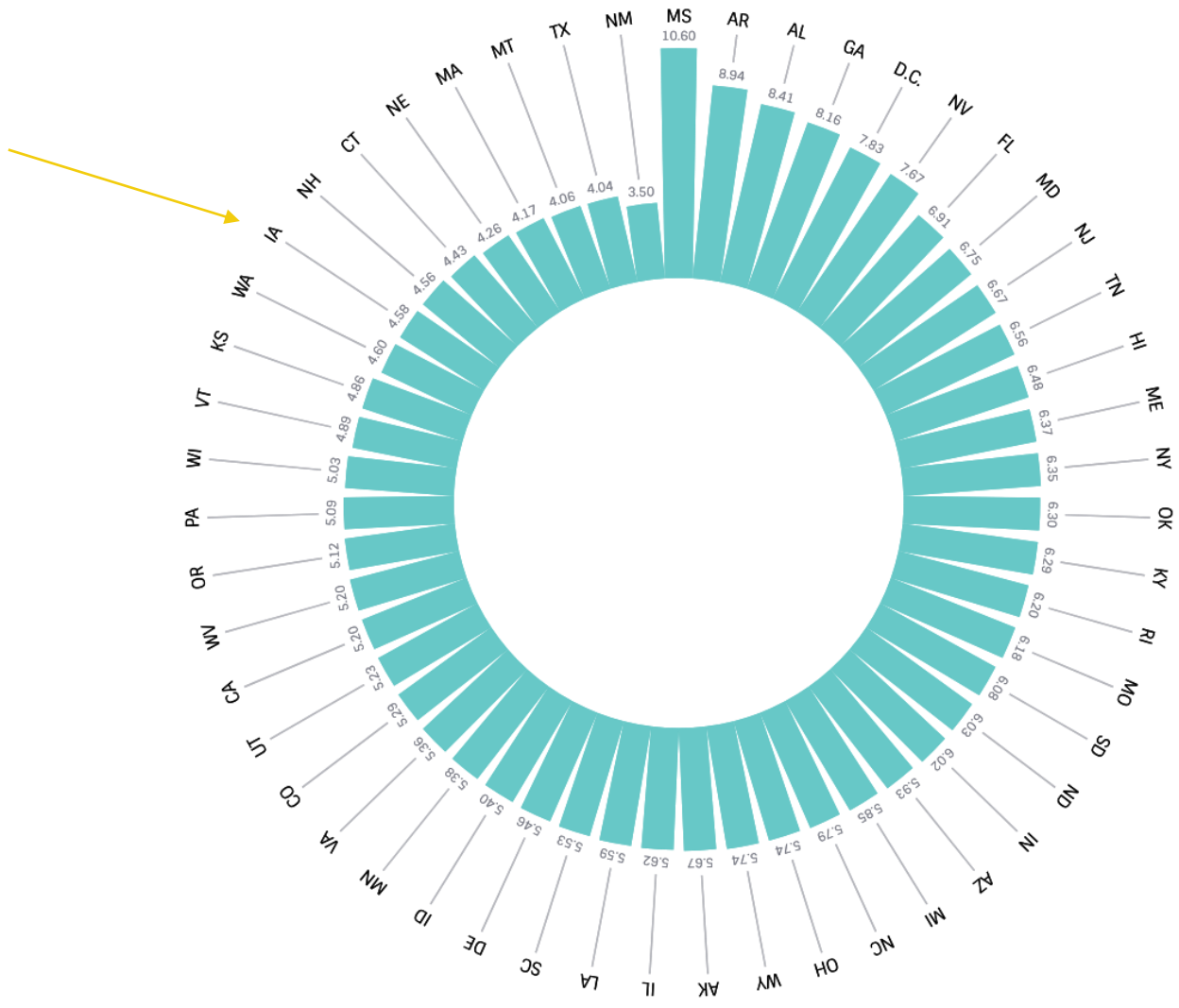


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- US data is from CDC Wonder
- Iowa stillbirth data is from Iowa Vital Statistics, IDPH
- Stillbirth rate is calculated by: $\text{Fetal Deaths} / \text{Total of Live Births} + \text{Fetal Deaths} * 1,000$

Alabama has the 3rd worst stillbirth rate in the Nation.



We want to get to where lowa is...or better!



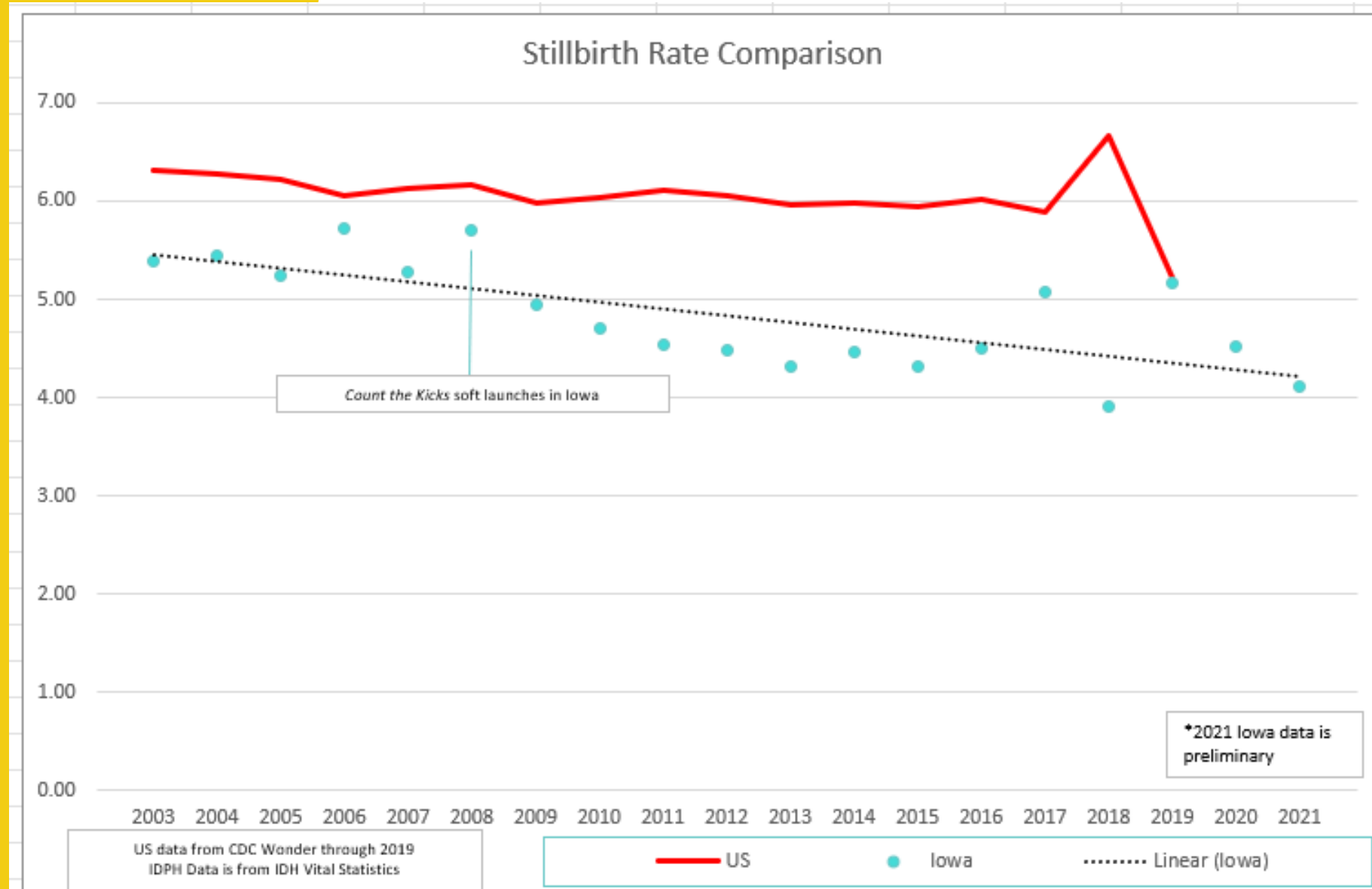
Source: CDC Wonder

The 2021 preliminary Iowa stillbirth rate is 4.1 fetal deaths per 1,000 live births.

This is the second lowest Iowa stillbirth rate on record.

The African American stillbirth rate in Iowa decreased 39% in the first five years of our program.

Based on 5-year average, per IDPH vital statistics 2003-2020.



Equality



Equity



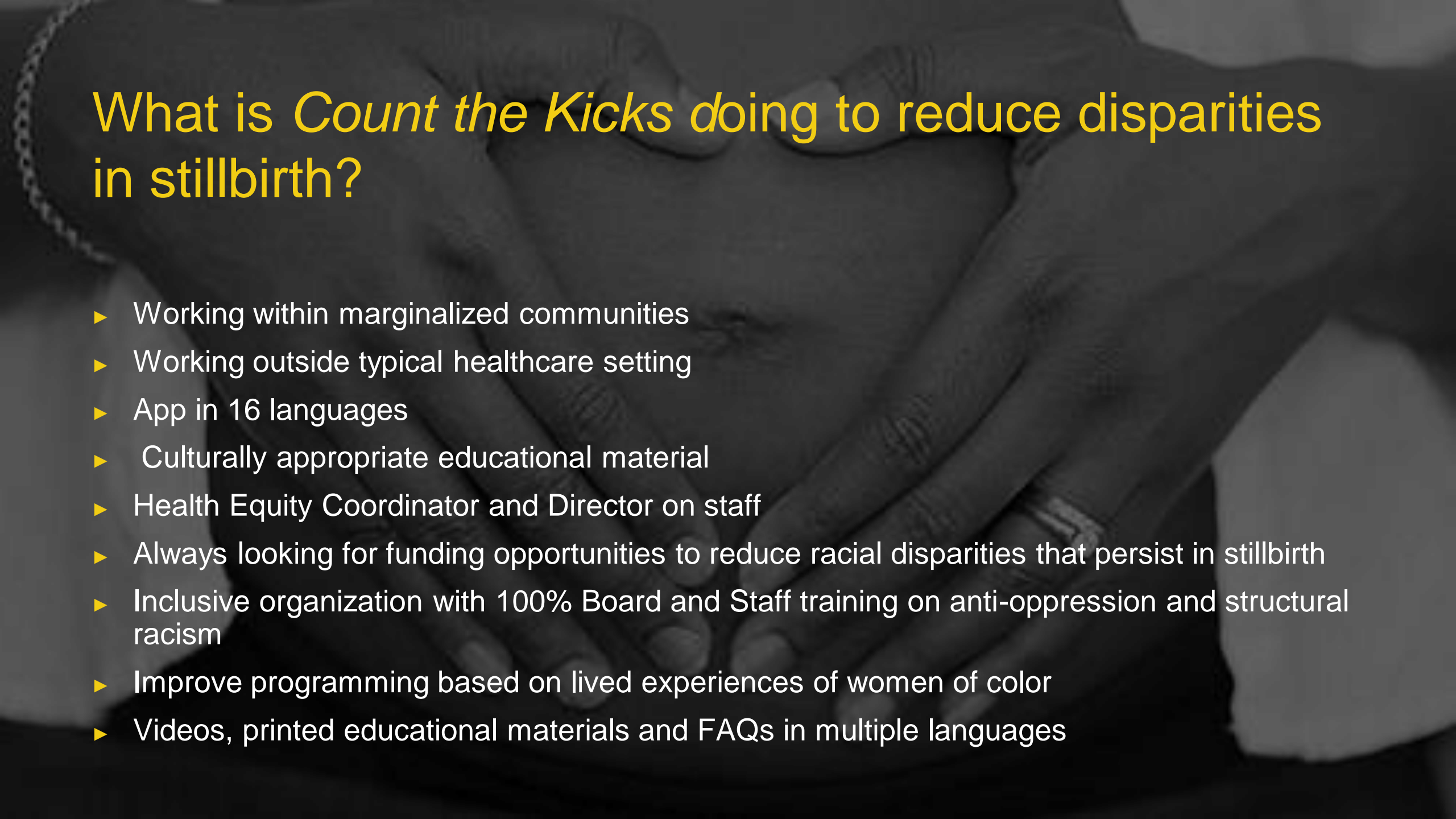
Justice



Racial Disparities

Why are there such large disparities for stillbirth?

- ▶ Research shows that there are a lot of contributing factors to the racial health disparities in stillbirth.
- ▶ Researchers point to the following as causes for the disparities:
 - ▶ **Systemic Racism.**
 - ▶ **Toxic Stress.** Research shows that years of being treated unequally and/or unfairly --- essentially being an African American woman in a systemically unjust society --- and all that comes with it --- have led to real and pervasive health issues for Black women.
 - ▶ **Epigenetics** - Physiological variations that are caused by external or environmental factors that switch genes on and off and affect how cells read genes instead of being caused by changes in the DNA sequence.
 - ▶ **Predisposition to certain conditions** that may lead to stillbirth like gestational diabetes, preeclampsia or high blood pressure, which all are linked to maternal stress. Experts say Black women are less likely than other races to receive early treatment for these conditions.
 - ▶ **Access to healthcare.**
 - ▶ **Socioeconomic barriers.**
 - ▶ *Research shows education is NOT a determining factor. A college-educated Black woman is still more likely to lose her baby than a high school educated white woman.*



What is *Count the Kicks* doing to reduce disparities in stillbirth?

- ▶ Working within marginalized communities
- ▶ Working outside typical healthcare setting
- ▶ App in 16 languages
- ▶ Culturally appropriate educational material
- ▶ Health Equity Coordinator and Director on staff
- ▶ Always looking for funding opportunities to reduce racial disparities that persist in stillbirth
- ▶ Inclusive organization with 100% Board and Staff training on anti-oppression and structural racism
- ▶ Improve programming based on lived experiences of women of color
- ▶ Videos, printed educational materials and FAQs in multiple languages

What YOU can do to reduce disparities in stillbirth!

I CAN...

- ▶ Leave my bias at the door!
- ▶ Internal/External recognition of biases...BE THE VOICE!
- ▶ Identify Potential Best Practices
 - ▶ Listen to expectant parents (especially 1st time parents)
 - ▶ Be empathetic (sit with them, give eye contact, be with them, ask, “Do you feel comfortable?”)
 - ▶ Advocate for specific protocols surrounding reduced fetal movement
 - ▶ Offer CTK App
- ▶ Ensure media and brochures have a representation for people of color
- ▶ EDUCATE, EDUCATE, EDUCATE!!!



HEALTHY
birthDAY
IMPROVING BIRTH OUTCOMES



APRIL 2022
STILLBIRTH IN THE U.S. REPORT

The Link Between Stillbirth & Maternal Mortality and Morbidity: Firsthand Accounts from American Women



Overview

America is seen as a leading developed country in almost all aspects, including our medical and technology sectors. Billions of dollars are spent each year on health care innovation; yet the rate of maternal morbidity is higher than other well-resourced developed countries¹ and stillbirth rates remain high compared to other developed countries.²

Some attention and effort is given to researching stillbirth trends and identifying strategies to change the stagnant reduction in stillbirth rates; however, less research and attention is given to maternal outcomes for expectant parents who experience a stillbirth.

According to one study, **more than 15% of maternal deaths within 42 days of delivery occur in women who experienced a stillbirth.**^{3,4,5}

This isn't surprising when examining the risk factors associated with stillbirth, the demographics of women who experience the highest rates of stillbirth, and the current approaches to preventing and treating expectant parents who experience or are at risk of experiencing stillbirth.

— Author:
Dr. Lyndi Buckingham-Schutt

— Design & Layout
Anh Nguyen



Stillbirth & Maternal Mortality and Morbidity are Intrinsicly Connected!

Overview of the Link Between Stillbirth & Maternal Mortality and Morbidity

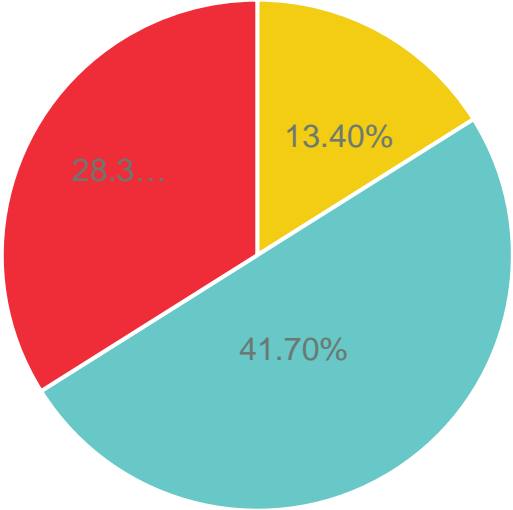
- ▶ America is seen as a leading developed country in almost all aspects; yet the rate of maternal morbidity is higher than other well-resourced developed countries
- ▶ Maternal morbidity describes any short- or long-term health problems that result from being pregnant and giving birth
- ▶ Some attention and effort is given to researching stillbirth trends and identifying strategies to change the stagnant reduction in stillbirth
- ▶ However, less research and attention is given to maternal outcomes for expectant parents who experience a stillbirth.
- ▶ According to one study, **more than 15% of maternal deaths within 42 days of delivery occur in women who experienced a stillbirth.**

Overview of the Link Between Stillbirth & Maternal Mortality and Morbidity cont.

- ▶ Not surprising when examining the risk factors associated with stillbirth, the demographics of women who experience the highest rates of stillbirth matters!
- ▶ Those demographics includes women who experience racism, parity (number of previous pregnancies), advanced maternal age, pre-existing diabetes and hypertension, gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, lack of private insurance, and less than a college education.

Overview of the Link Between Stillbirth & Maternal Mortality and Morbidity cont.

**PREGNANCY-RELATED MORTALITY RATIO
BY RACE/ETHNICITY
2014 - 2017**



■ White women ■ African America women ■ American Indian & Alaskan Native women ■

Innovative strategies to reduce Stillbirth and Maternal Mortality and Morbidity in dental settings

Initiate a *Count the Kicks* conversation with expectant patients

Incorporate *Count the Kicks* into the clinic workflow and chart documentation process

Utilize the free *Count the Kicks* tools and resources

Encourage the downloading and utilization of the *Count the Kicks* app

Oral Health and Pregnancy

60-75%
of women have
gingivitis when
pregnant.

1 in 4 women



of childbearing
age have untreated
cavities



Your baby's teeth start
to grow **3 months** into
the pregnancy.

Evidence shows that receiving dental care during pregnancy can improve the health of both baby and mother by reducing the risk of gum disease and poor birth outcomes.

Connect.the.Dots

System Building - Protocol for talking about fetal movement monitoring and oral health while pregnant.

Oral Health Innovation - Coordination between CTK with other well-known programs

Building trust within the communities - focus groups, representation, translated pieces

Integration of Oral Health and Overall Health - Oral health messaging in-app, website, videos





Start Counting!




Paying attention to oral health and your baby's movements is what moms should do.

It's important and easy too!

ASK HOW. ASK NOW.




Download the **FREE**
Count the Kicks® app today!

   countthekicks.org

Digital Media

Count the Kicks
May 30 · 🌐

DO YOU KNOW? Evidence shows that receiving dental care during pregnancy can improve the health of both baby and mother by reducing the risk of gum disease and poor birth outcomes. Oral health and pregnancy go hand-in-hand. We are partnering with [Delta Dental of Iowa](#) to educate expectant parents about the importance of oral health care during pregnancy. Visit our website to learn more.



THEKICKS.ORG
Oral Health + Pregnancy - Count the Kicks
Connection Between Oral Health & Pregnancy Evidence shows that receiving dental care ...

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Did You Know?

Good dental health habits are even more important during pregnancy. Make sure to see your dentist while pregnant; it is safe and important for both you AND your baby.

75%
of women have periodontitis when pregnant.

1 in 4 women
of childbearing age have untreated cavities

Your baby's teeth start to grow **3 months** into the pregnancy

Regular dental checkups can reduce your risk of periodontitis. If you're expecting a baby, be sure to schedule your next dental visit.



Your baby's teeth start to grow 3 months into the pregnancy.

Count the Kicks 





Why Does Movement Matter?

- Movement is one very important way a baby communicates before birth.
- A change in a baby's movement can be an EARLY sign and sometimes ONLY warning that a baby may give when in distress.



A Baby During Pregnancy is Just Like All of Us.

- ▶ When we are not feeling well, we change our activity level. We may lay in bed instead of exercising or doing our daily actives – we slow down.
- ▶ Baby's movements may become weaker during a time of distress.
- ▶ When a baby is not feeling well, they natural preserve blood flow to vital organs such as the brain and heart to conserve energy and self protect.

Why does a babies movement change when they are in distress?

Talking about *Count the Kicks*

When:

- 26 weeks if high risk, 28 weeks otherwise

How:

- Tell me what you know about the importance of tracking your baby's movements?
- Let's talk about how to track your baby's movements.
 - *Count each day*
 - *Learn baby's normal pattern*
 - *Speak Up if you notice a change*
- Share how movements are jabs, rolls, pushes, anything but hiccups
- Share the *Count the Kicks* App which will help clients also bond with their baby.



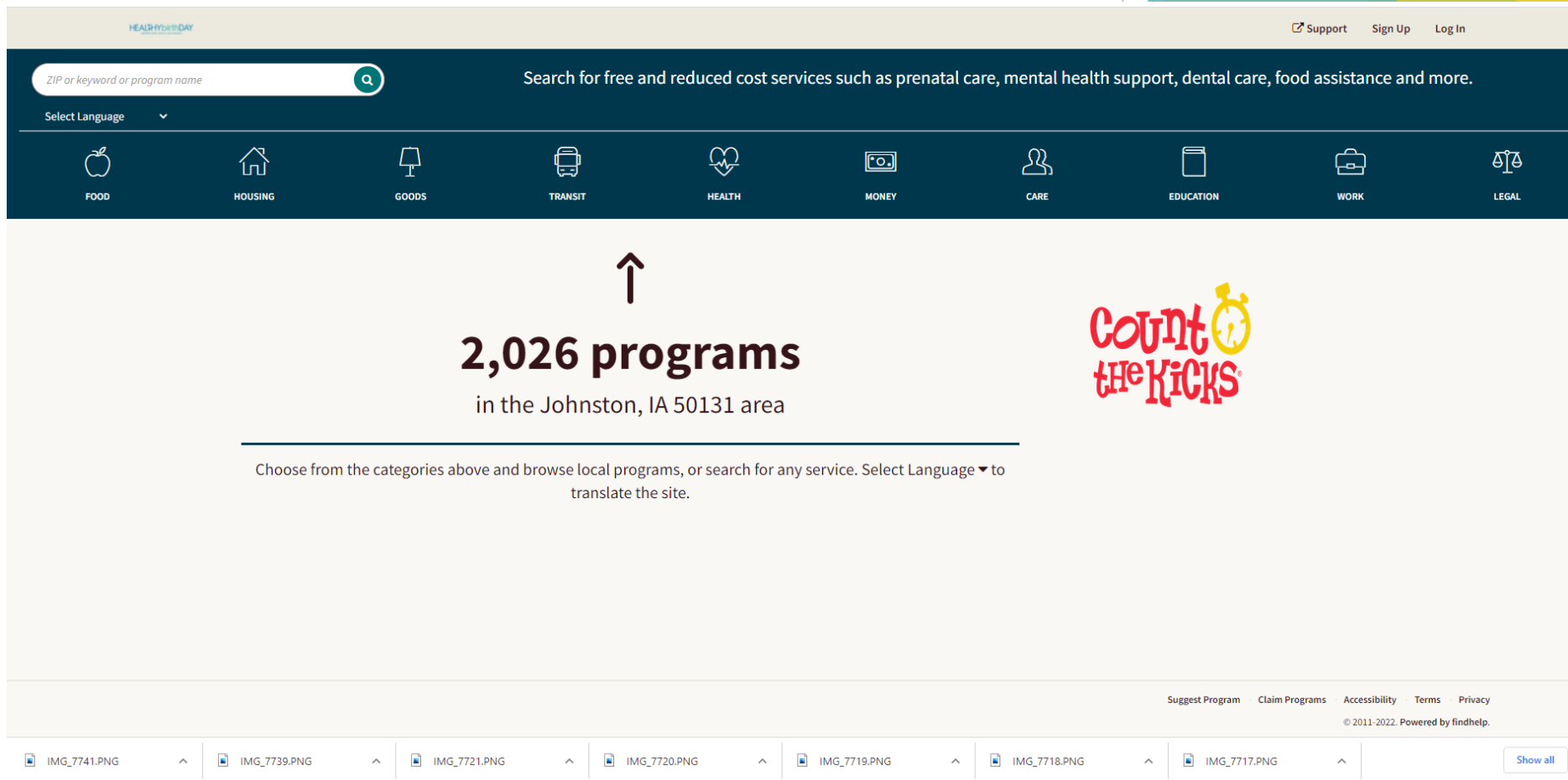


- Our FREE app is evidence-based and available in 16 languages
- Available for Apple and Android products
- Users can restart their session or delete a kick
- Set a daily reminder to *Count the Kicks*
- Review kick-counting history
- Download history to share with their provider, family or friends via text or email
- *Count the Kicks* with twins
- Track future pregnancies on the same profile
- Manage multiple devices registered to your account
- Available on Apple smartwatches!
- Web-based Kick Counter





www.healthybirthday.findhelp.com





Common Myths

My baby is always active, so I don't need to count kicks.

- ▶ **False.** Even active babies can experience distress, sometimes quickly and without other warning signs. Tracking your baby's movement every day takes the guesswork out of knowing if a normally active baby has slowed down. *Count the Kicks* gives you real data to show your healthcare provider if you have a concern.

Only those experiencing a high-risk pregnancy should pay attention to their baby's movement.

- ▶ **False.** ALL expectant women should be educated on *Count the Kicks* and get to know what's normal for their baby.

My baby should get 10 kicks in 2 hours.

- ▶ **False.** Every baby is different, and the recommendation to expect 10 kicks in 2 hours is outdated. Current research indicates moms should work to understand the normal amount of time each day it takes their baby to get to 10 movements each day.

I can just use a Doppler device to monitor my baby's well-being.

- ▶ **False.** A change of the baby's heartbeat is one of the last things that occurs when a baby is in distress. A change in a baby's movement may indicate potential problems before actual changes in the heart rate are detected. Expectant parents should only use a Doppler device under the guidance of a healthcare provider.

Common Myths

If baby isn't moving, I should drink cold water or eat something sugary to get baby moving.

- ▶ **False.** Research has moved away from the idea that sugary drinks and the like are a good way to get baby to move. Kick counts are best monitored **WITHOUT** interventions like juice, candy, etc. If baby isn't moving like normal, parents should speak up to their provider right away.

Babies kick less near the end of pregnancy.

- ▶ **NO!** Babies don't run out of room at the end of pregnancy. The types of movements may change (more jabs, fewer rolls), but babies should move up to and even during labor. If an expectant parent is monitoring their baby's movements at the same time each day, it should take about the same amount of time to feel 10 movements.

Pregnant people should avoid dental care.

- ▶ **False.** Good dental health is **ALWAYS** important. Pregnancy can increase an expectant parent's risk of dental issues, thus overall health issues.

Triage doesn't need any Count the Kicks education.

- ▶ **False.** L&D Triage is the perfect place to have this information. Posters, brochures and discharge papers all should be used when someone comes in for **ANYTHING** and is sent home.

Connect...



the...



Dots...



How?

- Participating in this training!
- Downloading the app
- Utilizing our resources
- Educating your patients and staff

Integrate into any intake or systems protocol.

“Do you know about the importance of not just brushing your teeth while pregnant but also tracking your baby’s movement?”

“Let’s talk about why you should track your baby’s movement just like why you should be brushing your teeth.”

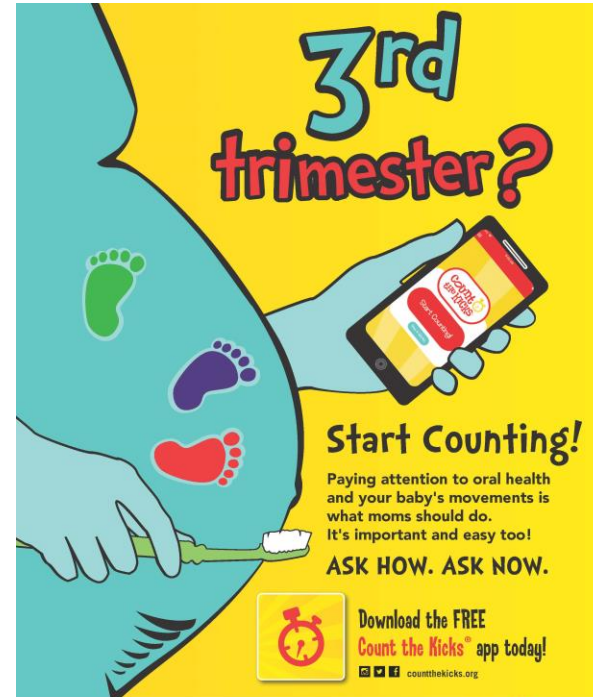
“You already are such a great mom by taking care of your teeth, here is another way you can be a great mom AND bond with baby!”

Share these videos in your waiting rooms



3rd trimester?
Start Counting!
 Paying attention to oral health and your baby's movements is what moms should do. It's important and easy too!
ASK HOW. ASK NOW.
 Download the FREE **Count the Kicks** app today!
countthekicks.org

HEALTHY birthDAY | SA strategic partner | ALABAMA PUBLIC HEALTH | ORAL HEALTH OFFICE



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 This information is for educational purposes only and is not meant for diagnosis or treatment.
 Use of this information should be done in accordance with your healthcare provider.

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 The International Children's Education Association endorses Healthy Birth Day, Inc.™ and the Count the Kicks® stillbirth prevention campaign.

Oral Health – CTK Materials



Counting kicks is what moms should do. It's important and easy too!

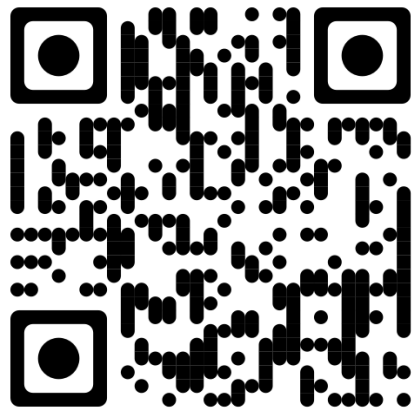
Here's How:
Starting at the 3rd trimester, begin counting.

- 1 Track your baby's movements with the **FREE Count the Kicks®** app or download a **Count the Kicks®** chart at countthekicks.org.
- 2 Count kicks every day—preferably at the same time.
- 3 After a few days, you will begin to see a pattern for your baby—how long it takes your baby to get to 10 movements.
- 4 Call your provider right away if you notice a change in strength of movements or how long it takes your baby to get to 10 movements.

Download the **FREE Count the Kicks®** app today

countthekicks.org

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Educational Material

- ▶ Promo Posters in English and Spanish
- ▶ How To Posters in English and Spanish
- ▶ App Card Reminders
- ▶ Brochures
- ▶ Picture-Based
- ▶ Magnets
- ▶ FREE!
- ▶ www.countthekicks.org

How to Incorporate *Count the Kicks* into the clinic workflow and chart documentation process

- ▶ Add a question – as Simple as that!
 - ▶ Have you heard about *Count the Kicks*?
 - ▶ Yes or No
 - ▶ If YES – Great! What do you know about Count the Kicks? Let's take a few moments to talk through this kick counting app. When you are in your 3rd trimester make sure to use it daily
 - ▶ Encourage patient to talk to their OBGYN/MIDWIFE/Primary Care about it
 - ▶ If NO – No worries, I would love to tell you more about it –
 - ▶ When you enter your 3rd trimester it's important to not just take care of your teeth but also to count your baby's movements. Starting at 28 weeks you can download this FREE app and start tracking how long it takes your baby to move daily. Here is a brochure with more information. I highly recommend talking to your Provider about it.

Proclamation By the Governor of Alabama
Count the Kicks Month

Whereas, the mouth is considered the gateway to the body and therefore affects overall health and well-being, and its maintenance is essential to speech, mastication (chewing), expression of emotions, and self-esteem; and

Whereas, a fundamental aspect of dental hygiene is patient education to improve and maintain good dental health, including prevention of dental caries and periodontal disease; and

Whereas, oral health is connected to total health, and it is imperative to start early with a daily oral care routine to help prevent cavities and periodontal disease; and

Whereas, poor oral health may contribute to various diseases and conditions, including endocarditis, cardiovascular disease, and pneumonia; and

Whereas, preventive dental visits are important for expectant mothers since periodontal (gum) disease is a contributor to low birth weight and preterm births, both of which are associated with infant mortality; and

Whereas, low birth weight and preterm births before 37 weeks of pregnancy contribute to infant mortality; and Alabama's 2020 infant mortality rate of 7.0 deaths per 1,000 live births is higher than the U.S. rate, which was provisionally 5.5 in 2020; and Alabama's infant mortality rate is disproportionately high in Black infants compared to infants of other races; and

Whereas, one in every 168 pregnancies ends in stillbirth and a change in baby's movement is one of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 15 urgent maternal warning signs; and

Whereas, dental hygienists can educate expectant parents about preventing stillbirth by making them aware when signs of potential problems develop by identifying changes in fetal movements in the third trimester of pregnancy; and

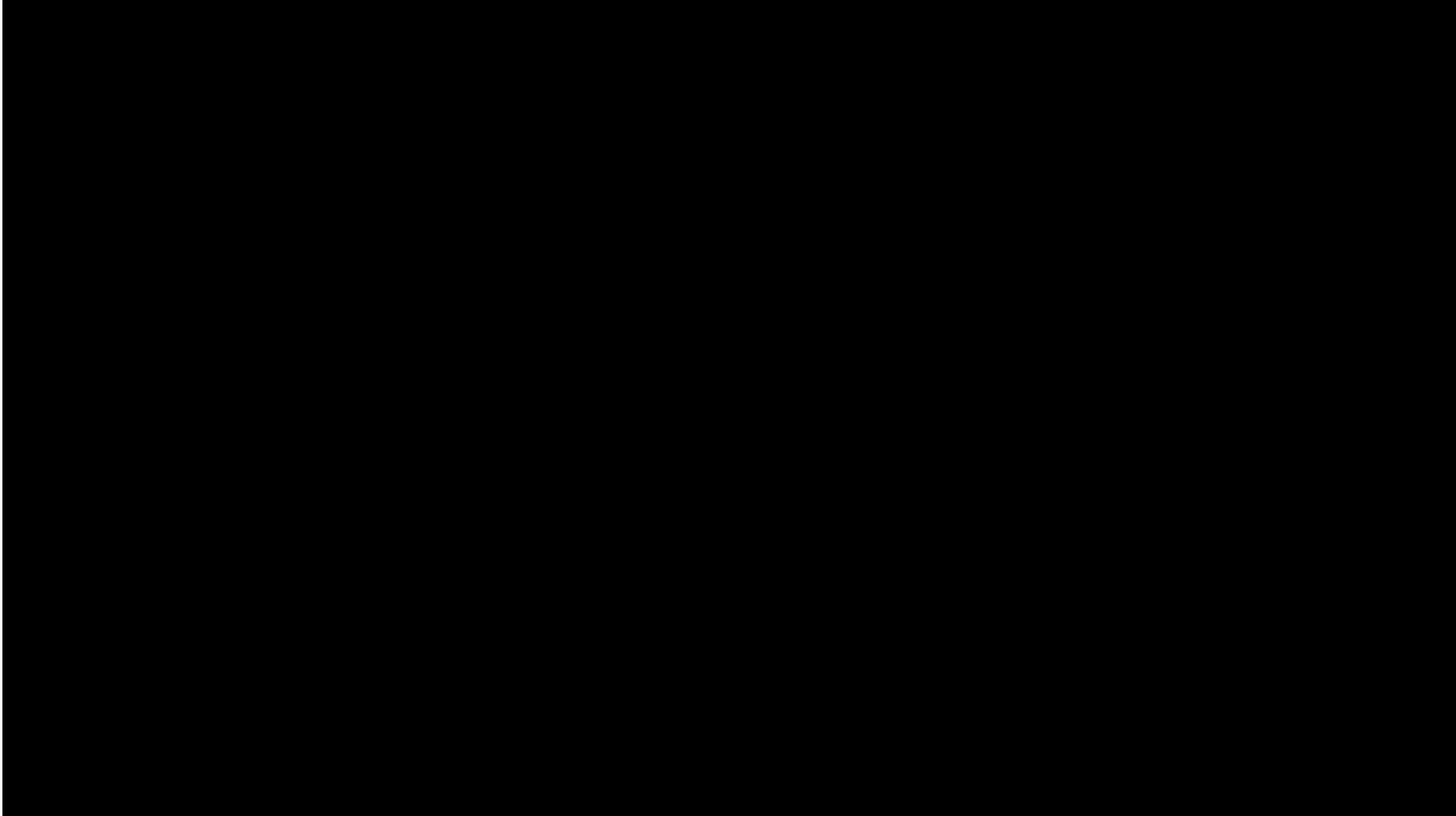
Whereas, in an inaugural collaborative campaign, dental providers statewide are taking an active role in promoting the evidence-based *Count the Kicks* initiative to help empower parents to prevent premature births and fetal deaths, thus saving lives.

Now, therefore, I, Kay Ivey, Governor of Alabama, do hereby proclaim the month of December 2022, as *Count the Kicks Month* in the State of Alabama and encourage all Alabamians to increase their awareness and understanding of oral health and its link to overall health for Alabamians of all ages.

December

Count the Kicks Month

Testimonies from expectant parents and how *Count the Kicks* help save their babies



Meet Aspen – Alabama Baby Save



“As a first-time expectant mom, I was happy to learn about the free *Count the Kicks* App from the *Count the Kicks* educational materials shared at my doctor’s office. My OB was insistent that I count kicks every day in the third trimester to help me track my daughter’s health. I created my kick counting routine based on when I noticed that my daughter was most active. The app was so easy to use and did help me learn my baby’s kicking habits.”

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Stillbirth remains a significant public health crisis in the United States. Approximately 23,500 babies are stillborn in the United States each year. Identifying and providing appropriate interventions for pregnant people is critical to potentially improving the outcomes for their babies and for themselves. Fetal movement monitoring is one evidence-based intervention that may lead to better outcomes.





THANK YOU!

We want to help save babies with you.

www.CountTheKicks.org

www.HealthyBirthday.org

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April 2022 STILLBIRTH IN THE U.S. REPORT

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