

The Alabama Department of Public Health and The March of Dimes Prematurity Summit



march of dimes

Embassy Suites
Montgomery, Alabama
Friday, November 14, 2014

From the Clotilda to the Magic City Classic: How Far Have We Really Come?

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Objectives

- To clarify the reality of an infant born to a woman in Alabama and their hope (or fate) for the future
- To understand, and provide examples, that the birth and life of a child is interdependent upon the community in which the child lives (i.e. Birthing Project)

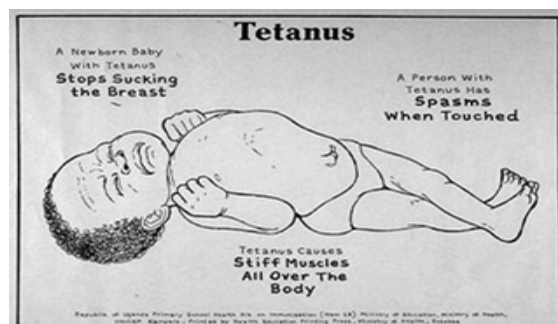
Infant Mortality During Slavery

- “There was nothing the planter was more interested in than the increase of his slaves through the birth and rearing of children”⁴
- Importance of prenatal care: Slave women were assigned lighter tasks, confinement, midwifery or actual physicians
- Postnatal care: Mothers were out of work for approximately four weeks and assigned lighter tasks

Infant Mortality During Slavery

- Postnatal care: Breastfeeding was a TOP priority among slave women
- A ‘nurse’ was kept in charge of the infants
- Postnatal infant deaths were mainly due to infectious etiologies
- Co - sleeping was an issue then and now

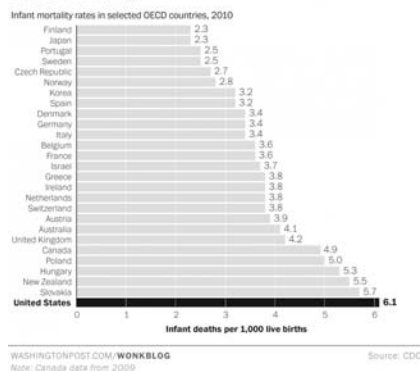
Trismus Infantum



Infant Mortality Rates During Slavery

- Infant mortality rates of slave infants: Were smaller during the first month when compared with the other 11 (neonatal rates about 35.9% of total infant mortality)
- IM Rates of 1850: ~100 per 1000 live births
 - Slave Women: ~150/170 per 1000 live births

U.S. lags behind other wealthy nations on infant mortality



Where Do WE Rank? (Kaiser Family Foundation)



Washington DC



US Territory



Mississippi



Alabama

Interesting Stats for 2013 for Infant Mortality in Alabama

- AL - Black 12.6% (US-Black 11.4%) vs. AL - White 6.9% (US-White 5.1%)
- Number of teen births 2007 - 2013: 8,776 to 5,420
- Percentage of births to teenagers 2006 - 2013: 13.7% to 9.3%

Interesting Stats for 2013 for Infant Mortality in Alabama

- IMR teenagers to adults: 12.5% to 8.2%
- Years 2003 - 2013: ~10% of births are low birth weights
- 76% of births had adequate Prenatal Care (PNC), but there were still > 800 births in AL without PNC

Births in 2013 and Alabama

	Total Number	Rate	Rates of White	Rates of Black
Jefferson	8,626	13.1	12.2	14.1
Madison	4,106	11.8	11.2	13.4
Mobile	5,576	13.5	11.7	15.1
Montgomery	3,165	14.0	12.1	15.2

Births to Teenagers As a percent of all births in 2013 (Alabama)

	Total Number	Total Percent	White (%)	Black (%)
Jefferson	678/8,626	7.9%	214 (4.9%)	464 (10.9%)
Madison	280	6.8%	146 (5.4%)	134 (9.5%)
Mobile	572	10.3%	258 (8.3%)	314 (12.6%)
Montgomery	309	9.8%	50 (4.6%)	259 (12.5%)

Fetal Deaths in 2013 in Alabama

	Total Number	White	Black
Jefferson	95	23	72
Madison	37	13	24
Mobile	37	12	25
Montgomery	31	3	28

Infant Death and IM Rates in 2013 in Alabama (8.6%)

	Total Number	White	Black
Jefferson	109 (12.6%)	37 (8.5%)	72 (16.9%)
Madison	37 (9.0%)	20 (7.4%)	17 (12.1%)
Mobile	54 (9.7%)	22 (7.1%)	32 (12.9%)
Montgomery	24 (7.6%)	4 (3.7%)	20 (9.6%)



Birthing Project USA

"The Underground Railroad for New Life"

An International Organization & Resource Center for improving birth outcomes for women of color.
Enter [HERE](#)

"We grow healthier babies by providing care and support to their mothers during and after pregnancy!"

Infant Mortality and the Birthing Project

Infant Mortality

- Last year in the US nearly 4,000,000 infants were born.**
- Over 241,000 of these infants were born weighing under 5.5 lbs.**
- Highest rates seen in African-American and Puerto Rican**
- 57,000 of these infants were born weighing under 3.5 lbs.**
- Highest rates seen in African-American**
- Last year nearly 30,000 infants died before their first birthday.**
- Highest rates seen in African-American, Asian, and Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Puerto Rican**
- Last year nearly 10,000 of these infants died before they turned one month of age.**
- Highest rates by a factor of 2 were seen in African-Americans**
- Last year 250 women died from childbirth complications.**
- Highest rates seen in African-American women**
- Black infants are more than twice as likely as white infants to die within their first year of life.**

Birthing Project USA

Our national, community-based, organization serves mothers and babies who need health care and social support to improve their chance of having good birth outcomes. We began in 1988 in Sacramento, CA with 9 women and 1 man. Since then, we have been replicated in over 300 cities and in four countries. We have welcomed more than 10,000 babies into the world.

Programs and their program models we have welcomed over 11,000 babies

1. Sisterhood
2. Saturday Morning Beauty Salon
3. Hairbraiding
4. Academy of Dreams

Our Five Key Areas Approach to Combating Infant Mortality

1. **Empower** - Empowers must be put out
2. **Engage** - Those most at risk must be given a voice and made part of their solution
3. **Educate** - Knowledge is the key step in any change
4. **Empire** - Foster a sense of entitlement around good health
5. **Empower** - Every great movement has started with one person demanding change

"The Birthing Project, which has grown into an international organization of mostly grassroots women providing support to mothers in the matter of good birth outcomes, is the only organization that has done this... We need such groups, the more, the better, the more successful they are, the better for us. The key to our success is that we have been able to do this in a way that is not just for us, but for everyone. We need such groups, the more, the better, the more successful they are, the better for us, the better for everyone."

Birthing Project USA

801 P & Carroll Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118 Tel: 504.882.6888 WWW.BIRTHINGPROJECTUSA.ORG

What is the Birthing Project?

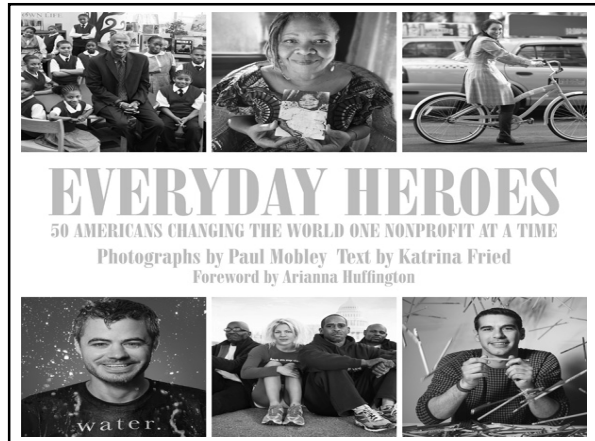
- The Birthing Project is the “only National African American maternal and child health program in the United States. Its purpose is to encourage better birth outcomes by providing practical support to women during their pregnancy and for one year after birth of their children”

What is the Birthing Project?

- Mission: Assist the local communities to improve their health status addressing the systemic causes: deficiencies in education, social justice, and economic disparities
 - Identification of needs
 - Implementing of programs / services
 - Working collaboratively with other organizations

Birthing Project

- When: First began in Sacramento, CA in 1988 comprised of “SisterFriends” providing one - on - one attention to pregnant teens / women
- Where: There are over 100 Birthing Projects open nationwide / globally
 - Recently: Tupelo and Anguilla, MS
 - Globally: Honduras; Addis Adaba, Ethiopia; Lagos, Nigeria



Birthing Project

- How: Need 10 women that can commit to being “conductors on the Underground Railroad” of New Life for 18 months
 - Can operate from Homes, Churches, Service groups (i.e. Sororities), Clinics, Health Departments, Hospitals, and places of employment

Birthing Project SisterFriend Program

- Each “SisterFriend” is responsible for befriending one woman (whether teenage / adult) prenatally through the child’s first year of life
- Who can be a SisterFriend?
 - Anyone who is committed to the cause (regardless of formal education, marital status, ethnic background...)

Birthing Project: SisterFriend Program

- **Strategy:**
 - **Pregnancy:** complying with prenatal care and learning of resources to maintain a healthy lifestyle (healthy diet, smoking cessation)
 - **Collaboration with other organizations:** Health Departments, Social Services

Birthing Project: SisterFriend Program

- **Attending childbirth and parental classes**
- **Infancy:** parenting and life skills, importance / affirmation of continuing formal education, employment goals, understanding the community
- **OUTCOME:** Over 10,000 babies born into the Birthing Project Community

Importance of Paternal Involvement

- **Infants with absence fathers revealed LBW babies, prematurity, and SGA**
- **Black infants (without present fathers) had a four-fold increase in infant mortality**
 - **Regardless of race, neonatal death rate of absent fathers is quadrupled those with involved fathers**

Importance of Paternal Involvement

- **Black infants born to absent fathers were 7 times more likely to die than Hispanic / White infants**
- **More OB complications: chronic HBP, anemia, placental abruption**

Barber Shop Program

- **Assists fathers to become active parents in their children's lives (starting prenatally - infancy and beyond)**
 - **Parenting classes**
 - **Job training (resume' assistance)**
 - **Housing placement**
 - **Counseling: anger, substance abuse**
 - **Legal / Medico - Assistance**
 - **Re-entry from criminal justice system**

Barber Shop Program



Dr. Nina Ford Johnson's Experience: Nashville Birthing Project

- **My Little Sister:** 19 year old G2P1, mother of Navaeh
- **Me:** 3rd / 4th year medical student at Meharry Medical College
- **Attended classes with her at the Village for Cultural Arts in Nashville once a month on Saturdays**

Dr. Nina Ford Johnson's Experience: Nashville Birthing Project

- **Advised to contact her once a week to check in with her (often times she contacted me)**
- **I attended several of her prenatal visits**

Dr. Nina Ford Johnson's Experience: Nashville Birthing Project

- **I was present on the same day of both deliveries of my little sister and her older sister (with 2 totally different outcomes)**
 - **Older sister: the baby boy died during the delivery**
 - **My little sister: I was present for the delivery of a healthy baby girl and was able to hold her minutes thereafter**

Thank You!!

- **Special Gratitude:**
 - **Kelly Warren, MSW, MPH (Public Health Director of MCHD) for all of the Alabama Statistics she assisted me with**
 - **Dr. Kim Wyche - Etheridge: Assistant Director for Public Health Initiatives at Tennessee State University and the Medical Director for the Birthing Project**

Thank You!!

- **Special Gratitude:**
 - **Birthing Project USA office administrators for pictures**
 - **Ms. Tracee Wallace (and her daughter) for the interview**
 - **Mrs. Lillian Maddox - Whitehead for the photos of the Nashville Birthing Project**

Sources

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