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GOVERNOR O'MALLEY AND LT. GOVERNOR BROWN ANNOUNCE MARYLAND INFANT MORTALITY RATE DROPS FOR SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

New data reflect all-time low; progress seen in reducing African-American infant deaths

ANNAPOLIS, MD (August 24, 2011) - Governor Martin O'Malley today joined by Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown, Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, and other state and local officials, announced that Maryland's infant mortality rate has dropped substantially for a second consecutive year to the lowest rate recorded for the State. [Reducing infant mortality is one of the O'Malley-Brown Administration's 15 strategic goals to improve the quality of life in Maryland.](#)

Maryland's infant mortality rate has been above the national average for many years. In 2009, the infant mortality rate fell to 7.2 deaths per 1,000 births, a 10 percent reduction in the overall infant mortality rate compared with the previous year, according to data from the Maryland Vital Statistics Administration. The 2010 data announced by the Governor today, show that the infant mortality rate has fallen again to 6.7, a further 7 percent decrease from 2009 and a new milestone for Maryland.

"The Talmud says that 'to save one life, it is as if you had saved the world.' In our State, where there is no such thing as a spare Marylander, we lost 45 fewer infants in 2010 than we lost in 2009. But the loss of one young life is one too many," said Governor O'Malley. "Our work continues."

There is a significant racial disparity in infant mortality. According to the National Vital Statistics System and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) Vital Statistics Administration, African-American infants have a higher infant mortality rate than white infants, both in Maryland and the U.S. In Maryland on average over the past decade, an African-American infant has been three times more likely to die in the first year of life than a white infant.

"Eliminating health disparities such as those associated with infant mortality is a top priority for our administration and the improvements we announced today are a sign of progress in that effort. But there is still much work to be done," said Lt. Governor Brown. "We must strengthen our resolve and intensify our efforts to work toward a day when every infant born in Maryland has an equal chance to survive and thrive."

"In Baltimore City, we have made significant progress in reducing the infant mortality rate, but there is more work to be done. We must continue our efforts to educate pregnant women, new parents and infant caretakers on the ABCs of safe sleep: Alone, Back, Crib – no exceptions," said Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

Broad public health initiatives, led by DHMH, have been underway across the State to improve birth outcomes. The jurisdictions with the highest infant mortality rates have been targeted, including Baltimore City, Prince George's, Somerset and Dorchester Counties. Baltimore City and Prince George's County account for 42

percent of all infant deaths in the State. In 2009, the greatest improvement was seen in Prince George's County; in 2010, Baltimore City had the largest decrease in infant deaths.

"Sustained progress against infant mortality requires a number of efforts and improvements over many years," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, DHMH Secretary. "We are updating our strategy to do everything we can to improve birth outcomes."

To review the newly released 2010 Vital Statistics Administration's preliminary report that contains infant mortality statistics and a variety of data, <http://www.vsa.maryland.gov/>.

To read the Infant Mortality Epidemiology Work Group Report, <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/babiesbornhealthy>.

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