



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Health Press Release

Infant Mortality Awareness Month

News Release From: **Jackson County Health Department**
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Jackson County Infant Mortality Rate Moves in Positive Direction

JACKSON COUNTY, Mich. – Jackson County’s infant mortality rate is showing signs of improvement, according to 2015 Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) data which indicates a decline in the overall infant mortality rate. From 2006-2010 the five year average rate of 7.1 infant deaths per 1000 live births compared 2011-2015 average rate of 5.6 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. This falls below the Michigan five year average of 6.8 for that same time frame (2011-2015). “While we are encouraged by the trends, there is still much work to do” says Mary Kops, Nurse Abstractor for the Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) program at the Jackson County Health Department.

Infant mortality is defined as the death of a live-born baby before his or her first birthday. It is often used as a measure of a community’s overall health, reflecting environmental conditions, individual and family health, health care received, and social/living conditions. It is also a predictor of the health status of the next generation. Jackson County’s Infant Mortality data shows from 2011-2015 Jackson County averaged 10 infant deaths per year. The three leading causes of infant death in Jackson County are prematurity, sleep related deaths and birth defects.

Both Jackson County and Michigan struggle to decrease sleep related infant deaths. In Michigan 712 infants died in unsafe sleep environments from 2010-2014, indicating that not all parents and caregivers are getting the message about safe sleep practices. By eliminating just the unsafe sleep deaths, Michigan’s infant mortality rate could be reduced below the national average. “The loss of these babies to unsafe sleep environments is such a tragedy, particularly since such deaths are 100 percent preventable,” Kops said.

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