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Summit and launch of Oklahoma Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative attended by more than 200 stakeholders

Partnership aims to improve infant outcomes in Oklahoma

Oklahoma recently received good news that the state’s infant mortality rate (number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births) dropped from 8.6 in 2007 to 6.8 in 2013, a decrease of 21 percent.

Today more than 200 key stakeholders in this effort came together to continue this important work at the first annual summit and launch of the Oklahoma Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative. This collaborative of doctors, nurses, hospital leaders, public health providers and other stakeholders will continue and enhance the efforts of previous years to improve infant outcomes. It will also include activities to lower the rates of maternal deaths and severe illness related to childbirth. The summit is funded by the

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March of Dimes and the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

“This 21 percent improvement did not happen by accident. It was due to the efforts of private and public health care providers and their interested community partners in improving health outcomes for mothers and babies,” said Chad Smith, MD, medical director of the Oklahoma Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative. “The work originated from an Oklahoma State Department of Health priority goal to improve Oklahoma’s infant mortality rate. The Preparing for a Lifetime: It’s Everyone’s Responsibility initiative was developed to bring multiple stakeholders together to develop several strategies.”

Some of these strategies include eliminating early, elective deliveries; ensuring families receive education on infant safe sleep and normal crying patterns of babies; tobacco cessation services; and education and support for breastfeeding mothers.

Terry Cline, PhD, Oklahoma commissioner of health and secretary of health and human services, welcomed the group and presented awards to individuals and hospitals that have demonstrated excellence in the delivery of care to mothers and babies.

Steven Clark, MD, from the Baylor University College of Medicine and the Texas Children’s Hospital was the keynote speaker. Dr. Clark informed the group of the national priorities for care of the mothers and infants. Attendees also learned how Oklahoma birthing hospitals and providers can work together to deliver excellent care for mothers and infants.

The Oklahoma Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative will support hospitals and providers in their goals of providing safe, quality care to Oklahoma mothers and infants. Ensuring that pregnancies and babies are healthy can lay the foundation for a healthy life for Oklahoma’s families.

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Partners in the Oklahoma Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative include:
Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates, Community Health Centers, Inc./Central Oklahoma Healthy Start, Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa, Family Expectations, Indian Health Services, Infant Crisis Services, Inc., March of Dimes, Oklahoma Child Death Review Board, Oklahoma City Area Inter-Tribal Health Board, Oklahoma City-County Health Department, Oklahoma City Indian Clinic, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Oklahoma Family Network, Oklahoma Health Care Authority, Oklahoma Hospital Association, Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy, Oklahoma Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative, Oklahoma State Department of Health and County Health Departments, Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust, OU Medical Center, Safe Kids Oklahoma, Smart Start Oklahoma, The Parent Child Center of Tulsa, The State Chamber, Tulsa Health Department/Tulsa Healthy Start, Turning Point Coalitions, University of Oklahoma College of Continuing Education, and University of Oklahoma Departments of OB/GYN and Pediatrics.

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The Oklahoma Hospital Association represents more than 130 hospitals and health care entities across the state of Oklahoma. OHA's primary objective is to promote the welfare of the public by leading and assisting its members in the provision of better health care and services for all people. For more information, go to www.okoha.com.

The March of Dimes is the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health. With chapters nationwide and its premier event, March for Babies, the March of Dimes works to improve the health of babies. For the latest resources and information, visit marchofdimes.com or nacersano.org. Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

The Office of Perinatal Quality Improvement at The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City, has worked with Oklahoma birthing hospitals for 28 years to improve maternal and infant care for Oklahoma families by providing education, maximizing resources and collaborating with partners to identify and remove barriers to providing safe, quality perinatal care.

The Oklahoma State Department of Health’s “Preparing for a Lifetime, It’s Everyone’s Responsibility” is a statewide initiative to improve birth outcomes and reduce infant deaths in Oklahoma and focuses on seven specific areas: preconception and interconception care (being healthy before and between pregnancies), tobacco use prevention, prematurity, postpartum depression, breastfeeding, infant safe sleep, and infant injury prevention. Using state and community-based level partnerships, strategies include public education, policy change, and support of health care providers and birthing hospitals through training and technical assistance.