



## Brief Talking Points About Infant Mortality

### Geography

Babies born in rural areas have a 20% higher mortality rate than those in large cities. More than 100 rural U.S. hospitals have closed in the last decade. We can reduce infant mortality in rural areas by:

- Funding a short stay near a birthing center for at-risk moms as their due dates near.
- Provide funding for training medical personnel in rural hospitals so they can better deal with complicated births.
- Allow midwives and community health workers (doulas) to practice where there are shortages of medical doctors—and provide insurance coverage for their services.

### Poverty

There is a strong link between poverty and infant mortality. We can reduce the impacts of poverty by:

- Ensuring that low-income moms have affordable access to pre-natal care by expanding Medicaid programs.
- Funding adequate housing plans for homeless families and pregnant women.
- Allowing midwives and community health care workers called doulas to provide cost-effective and life-saving care.

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*Did you know?*

*According to Room to Grow, an agency that serves low-income parents, the most likely age to be homeless is 1.*

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### Racism

There is a strong racial component to infant mortality in our country. African American babies are more than twice as likely to die here than white infants. While America's racism problem cannot be solved overnight, there are concrete strategies that can make a difference in infant mortality.

- Expand the Medicaid program. States that did this made significant improvements in birth outcomes for both moms and babies. The improvements in those states' infant mortality were most striking among African Americans.
- Health care systems serving African American moms need to recruit, train, and fund African American doulas (community health care workers) and midwives to support new moms in their care.