

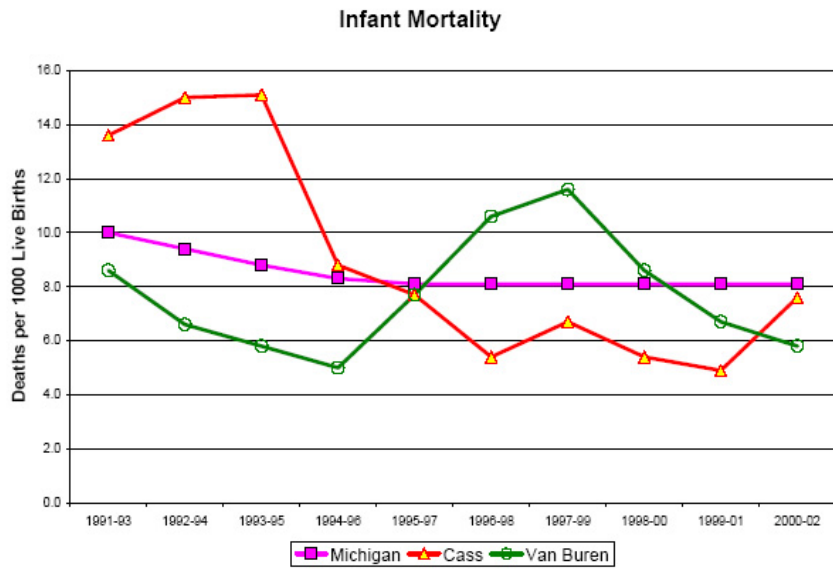


Van Buren / Cass Health View

September
2004

Focus on Infant Mortality

Infant mortality measures the number of deaths to children under the age of one. Socioeconomic status, lifestyle behaviors, prenatal, and medical care all have an impact on infant mortality. Because infant mortality reflects so many aspects of risk behaviors and medical care, it is an important gauge of the health of a community.



Over the last decade, infant mortality in Michigan has made modest progress. During that time, Cass County has improved from well above the state rate to roughly equal to it. Van Buren County briefly exceeded the state rate and is recently somewhat below it.. Although it is good o compare favorably with the state rates, diligence is needed to improve our rates further.

Several strategies seek to improve infant mortality. Health Department staff serve on the Child Death Review team, seeking to better understand local infant deaths and working to prevent future ones. The current prevention campaign is promoting “Back to Sleep”, encouraging parents to place babies on their backs to sleep, to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). A Community Baby Fair has been planned to give parents information and resources on child development, safety, and parenting.

Data is derived from the 2002- 1991 Michigan Resident Death Files and Michigan Resident Birth Files, Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, Michigan Department of Community Health.

This Community Health Report Card was prepared by the Van Buren/Cass District Health Department. For further information on this or other community health topics, contact the Director of Health Promotion at 269-621-3143 ext. 362 or visit the website at www.vbcassdhd.org.