



Van Buren / Cass Health View

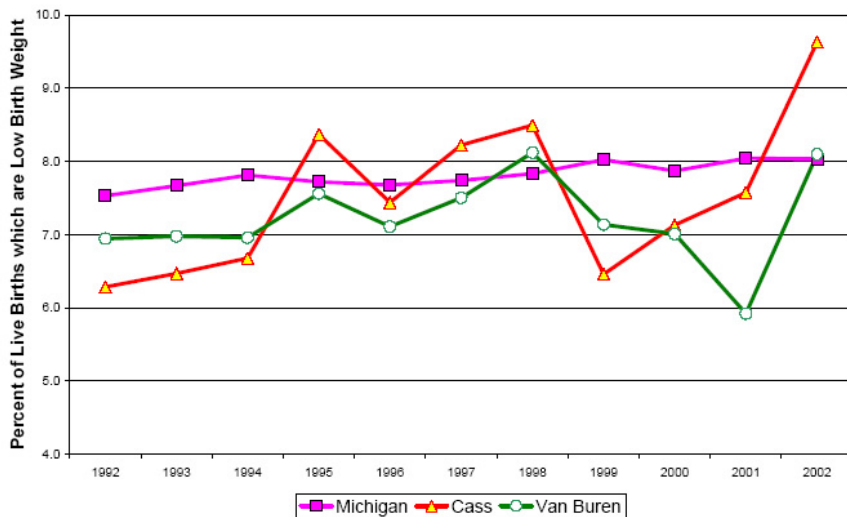
November
2004

Focus on Pregnancy Risks & Outcomes

Healthy communities have healthy pregnancies. This community report card focuses on indicators which describe important risks and outcomes of pregnancy. Two such indicators, were recently been described in their own editions of Health View; these were teenage pregnancy and infant mortality.

Low Birth Weight is closely correlated with fetal illness and death. Babies born weighing less than 5 lbs. 8 oz. are considered to have low birth weight.

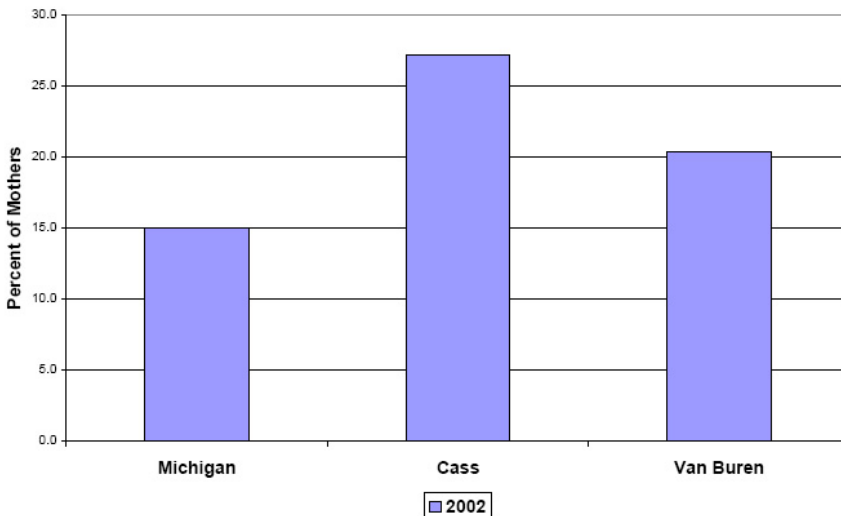
Percent Low Birth Weight



Michigan has showed a minor increase of low birth weight babies over the last decade. Although Cass County exceeded the state rate during the 2002, overall, Van Buren and Cass Counties have had comparable or less low birth weight rates than the state.

Tobacco use during pregnancy is a major risk factor for low birth weight, fetal growth retardation and spontaneous abortion.

Prenatal Smoking





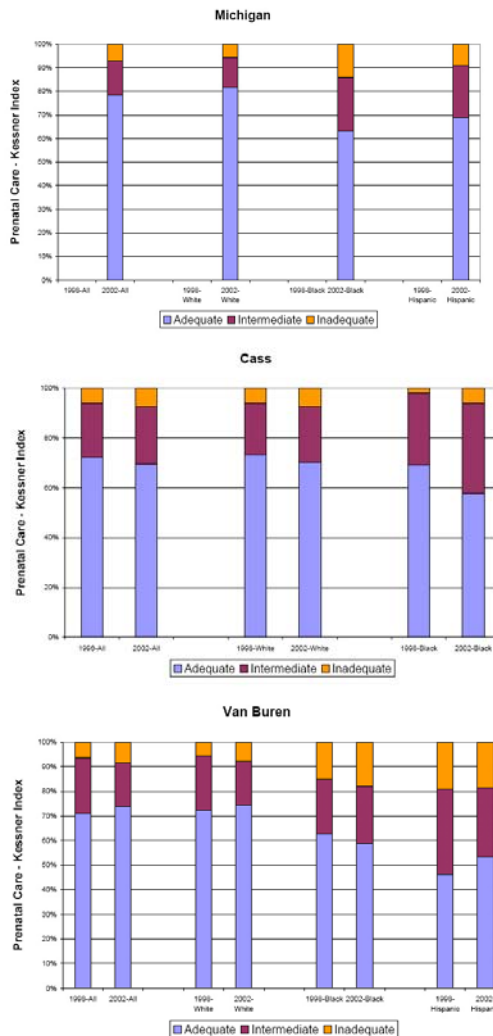
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Cass and Van Buren Counties both exceed the Michigan rate for smoking during pregnancy.

Early and frequent prenatal care has been shown to decrease adverse outcomes of pregnancy. The Kessner index assesses adequacy of prenatal care based on how early and how frequent are the obstetrical visits during pregnancy.



Prenatal care in Cass and Van Buren Counties, as in Michigan, continue to fall short of the Healthy People 2010 goal of 90%. Racial and ethnic disparities are prominent, regarding prenatal care for African Americans and Hispanics. There were not enough Hispanic pregnancies in Cass County to report Hispanic data separately.

Efforts to address prenatal risks are targeted to the high-risk groups such as teens and low-income women. Current pregnancy assistance services assure early and ongoing support, including: pregnancy confirmation, help locating medical care, education about pregnancy, nutritional counseling and social services. A teen parent program, coordinated by public health nurses, assists and supports teens to complete their education, receive timely physician care and financial help.

Data is derived from 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.