

FINAL REPORT
INFANT MORTALITY IN IOWA INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE

January 1992

AUTHORIZATION AND APPOINTMENT

The Infant Mortality in Iowa Interim Study Committee was established by the Legislative Council to "review historical trends in Iowa's infant mortality rates to identify the extent of the problem on a statewide basis. Identify areas in the state with the greatest incidence of infant mortality, and research health complications. Identify factors which lead to impoverished families, and research access to health care services. Survey and review the current structure of service provided to pregnant women in Iowa health care facilities, and solicit information on the level of existing prenatal services. Recommend changes in Iowa's health care system which would lower Iowa's infant mortality rate."

Members of the Committee were:

Senator Elaine Szymoniak, Co-chairperson
Representative Jack Hatch, Co-chairperson
Senator Mark Hagerla
Senator Jean Lloyd-Jones
Senator Al Sturgeon
Senator Maggie Tinsman
Representative Tom Baker
Representative Johnie Hammond
Representative Raymond Lageschulte
Representative Lee Plasier

COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

The Study Committee was authorized two meeting days which were held on September 26 and November 11, 1991.

Meeting of September 26, 1991

The presentations and discussions of the meeting of September 26, 1991, are summarized as follows:

Ms. Sue Schroeder, Executive Director of the Young Women's Resource Center, provided information to the Committee regarding the programs and services

provided by the Young Women's Resource Center. She discussed the issues of the lack of access to prenatal and postnatal care, the reasons provided by young parents for not obtaining prenatal and postnatal care, and the need for placement of clinics in readily accessible areas.

Dr. Ronald D. Eckoff, Iowa Department of Public Health, provided an overview of the programs provided by the Department relative to maternal and child health care and discussed the perinatal program established in Iowa by Dr. Herman Hein in the early 1970s.

Dr. Herman Hein, University of Iowa Professor of Pediatrics, Director of the Statewide Perinatal Care Program and a member of the National Commission to Prevent Infant Mortality, presented data to the Committee regarding infant mortality globally and specifically in Iowa. Dr. Hein suggested that the Committee consider the monitoring of nonpreventable and preventable causes of infant deaths, the implications of drug abuse on infant mortality, monitoring of entry into prenatal care, and monitoring of access to Medicaid. Dr. Hein noted that infant mortality is a symptom of the larger problem of poverty.

Ms. Jean Douglas Smith, Administrator, Des Moines Birthplace, discussed the services provided by the Birthplace and the use of nurse-midwifery in the birth process. Ms. Smith recommended that the Committee initiate a nurse-midwifery education program in Iowa; mandate availability of hospital privileges for nurse-midwives; mandate third-party reimbursement for nurse-midwifery care; consider operating a state-funded nurse-midwifery clinic in the Des Moines inner city; and change Medicaid reimbursement policies to encourage use of nurse-midwives.

Dr. Rizwan Shah, Medical Director, Family Ecology Center, Iowa Methodist Medical Center, provided information to the Committee regarding the problem of access to care for the indigent population and made the following recommendations: to provide better access to care; to provide support and financial assistance for early intervention education programs and health care; and to provide a multidisciplinary team approach to prenatal and follow-up care as is provided in Hawaii.

Ms. Penny Dickey, Director of Patient Services, Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa, presented information to the Committee regarding the services of Planned Parenthood and made the following recommendations: provide funding for the training of teachers to successfully teach the Human Growth and Development Curriculum; provide funding for school-based health clinics; and increase funding for family planning services that target the teenage population.

Ms. Melodee Hanes, Assistant Polk County Attorney, Polk County Attorney's Office, provided information to the Committee regarding the protocol used by Polk County to assist in tracking and investigating infant deaths. Ms.

Hanes recommended that the protocol be implemented statewide and that the performance of an autopsy be mandated for the death of any child under two years of age, as it is required in the case of any suspicious death of a child.

Mr. Vincent Lewis and Ms. Donna Rusk, Des Moines Alternative High School-North, provided information regarding the services provided by their school for young parents who are of school age and for other teens. They discussed the types of services that teenage parents require, including parenting skills, prenatal care, and a means of gaining economic self-sufficiency. They stressed the need for the provision of services for both young mothers and young fathers.

Mr. Mike Crawford, Child and Family Policy Center, Des Moines, presented information to the Committee compiled by Mr. Charles Bruner Executive Director of the Center. The information provides comparisons of Iowa county infant mortality rates and stresses the need for an array of outreach services and social and financial support as well as medical care in addressing the problem of infant mortality. The information also notes that risk factors associated with "preventable" infant deaths include poverty, race, adolescence, and high risk behaviors.

Co-chairperson Hatch provided the Committee with information regarding the correlation of various indicators of poverty with high infant mortality rates in the city of Des Moines, and recommended that the Committee focus on the broad issue of poverty.

Representative Hammond distributed information to the Committee which she had received from the Iowa Hospital Association regarding methods of payment for medical procedures associated with infant care and infant mortality.

Meeting of November 11, 1991

The second meeting of the Committee was held in Sioux City due to that city being rated highest in incidences of infant mortality in the state. The presentations, discussions, and recommendations of the meeting are summarized as follows:

Members of the staff of St. Luke's Regional Medical Center, Sioux City, including Ms. Bonnie Wiltse, R.N., Vice President of Maternal and Child Health; Dr. R. A. Cuestas, M.D., Medical Director; Dr. Lee Van Voorhis, M.D., Vice President of Medical Affairs; and Dr. Ray Sturdevant, M.D., a neonatologist in the Sioux City area, presented information regarding infant mortality in the Sioux City area as documented by the staff of St. Luke's Regional Medical Center.

Mr. Jeff Hackett, Executive Director, Florence Crittenton Home, presented information regarding infant mortality from the perspective of services provided to young mothers.

Ms. Fran Saddin, Nursing Director for Public Health Nursing, Siouxland District Health Department, presented information regarding the services provided to pregnant women and new mothers through the public health nursing program. She also provided information regarding Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and the services provided to parents who have lost children to SIDS.

Ms. Maureen Horsley, R.N., B.S.N., Certified Nurse Practitioner and Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner, Mid Sioux Opportunity, provided information regarding the preventive health care services provided through Mid Sioux Opportunity.

Ms. Molly Twohig, Catholic Charities, provided information regarding the Catholic Charities program which provides services to young people who are experiencing unplanned pregnancies.

Ms. Rhonda Spence, Supervisor of Early Childhood Services, Western Hills Area Education Agency, discussed the problem of the increasing number of children involved in the Agency's program for children 0 to 3 years of age who are special needs children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee discussed approaches to the issue of infant mortality and made the following recommendations:

1. The establishment of a statewide Infant Mortality Prevention Program to provide funds for community-based outreach programs to reduce or eliminate infant mortality.
2. The conducting of research or the compilation of existing data as a basis for the targeting of the Infant Mortality Prevention Program.
3. The development of an Infant Mortality Prevention Award to be awarded for outstanding efforts in decreasing or eliminating infant mortality in the state.
4. The evaluation of the Infant Mortality Prevention Program to assess the effectiveness of the Program.
5. The evaluation of existing programs to determine the feasibility of the shifting of revenue to provide funding for the Infant Mortality

Prevention Program, and the development of alternative sources of revenue which might include increased hospital or professional licensure fees.

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