



Kane County Health Department

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KANE COUNTY KICKS OFF PUBLIC HEALTH MONTH WITH AWARDS CEREMONY

The Kane County Health Department will kick off its *National Public Health Month* celebration with an awards breakfast and ceremony on April 6th.

“We will be honoring three *Hidden Heroes of Public Health*, county residents who have furthered public health principles and practices by providing valuable services to their fellow citizens,” said event coordinator Uche Onwuta, M.S., M.P.H., chief epidemiologist for the Health Department.

The 2004 breakfast and awards ceremony will take place Tuesday, April 6th beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the Kane County Judicial Center, 37W777 Rt. 38 in St. Charles (lower level multi-purpose room). Admission is free of charge and open to the public with prior reservation.

“This is our 7th annual recognition program and they never disappoint. It’s always both amazing and heartwarming to see what people are doing to help further public health,” Onwuta said.

National Public Health Week April 5-11 is supported by the American Public Health Association (APHA), the oldest and largest organization of public health professionals in the world, representing more than 50,000 members from over 50 occupations in public health. The theme of this year’s Public Health Week observance is “*Eliminating Health Disparities: Communities Moving from Statistics to Solutions.*”

“Within that context, the Kane County Health Department will be focusing on infant mortality during the entire month of April.”

According to an APHA fact sheet on Disparities in Infant Mortality:

- ❑ Nearly 28,000 infants died before their first birthday in 2000 – an infant mortality rate of 6.9 per 1,000 live births.
- ❑ The U.S. infant mortality rate is higher than that in 27 other nations.
- ❑ Infant mortality rates vary based on race and ethnicity. The 2000 infant mortality rate per 1000 births was:

- * 13.6 for African Americans
- * 8.2 for Native Americans
- * 5.7 for Whites
- * 5.6 for Hispanics
- * 4.8 for Asian/Pacific Islanders

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□ Causes of infant mortality also vary based on race and ethnicity. Potential reasons for disparities include (but are not limited to):

- **Age** – Younger and older mothers have higher preterm birth rates.
- **Cigarette Smoking** – Smoking is a potential factor in low birth weight and growth retardation.
- **Alcohol consumption** – Alcohol consumption is a potential factor in poor outcomes.
- **Unintended pregnancies** – Births resulting from unwanted conception may suffer from elevated risks of infant mortality and low birth weight.
- **Cultural** – Mexican Americans reported more prenatal stress, less support from the baby’s father, and more drug/alcohol use.
- **Obesity** – Asian/Pacific Islanders have the lowest obesity rate and African Americans have the highest.
- **Education** – More educated women have greater rates of prenatal care during the first trimester than less educated pregnant women.
- **Unequal care** – Rates of prenatal care in the first trimester vary significantly as follows:

- * Whites – 85%
- * Native Hawaiians & Pacific Islanders – 77%
- * Hispanics – 75%
- * African Americans – 74%
- * American Indians/Alaska Natives – 69%

“Earlier in the year, we partnered with the March of Dimes to focus on prematurity. This month’s programming is an extension of our focus on improving the outcomes for infants born in Kane County”, Onwuta said.

For more information or to RSVP for the breakfast call Sally Williams at 630-299-4221.

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