Premature birth
The financial impact on business

A national health crisis
• Affects 1 in 9 babies born in our country
• Can lead to long-term health problems and lifelong disabilities
• Is the leading cause of death during the first month of life
• Causes developmental delays, cerebral palsy, blindness and intellectual disabilities

A major impact on business
• Affects almost 11 percent of babies covered by employer health plans
• Places a multibillion-dollar burden on business, with employers billed more than $12 billion annually in excess health care costs
• Costs individual companies thousands of dollars in absenteeism and lost productivity

Nearly half a million babies will be born too soon in our country this year. The emotional impact of premature birth on families is high — and the cost to businesses is astronomical.

Childbirth and newborn care are a big part of employers’ health insurance costs, representing the most expensive conditions billed to commercial insurers for hospital care¹ and accounting for 7 of the top 10 individual hospital procedures billed.²
The March of Dimes is leading efforts to defeat premature birth. We’re funding team science to speed up finding answers and preventions. We’re educating women and assisting health professionals. Our hard work has paid off in a 6-year decrease in the preterm birth rate. There’s still a great deal of work ahead of us.

Partner with the March of Dimes and achieve your business and philanthropic objectives.

**The bottom line**

Employers pay 12 times as much in health care costs for premature/low birthweight (LBW) babies as for babies born without complications.

Each premature/LBW baby costs employers an additional $49,760 in newborn health care costs. When maternal costs are added, employers and their employees pay $58,917 more when a baby is born premature.

With 1 in 9 babies born prematurely, employers spend more on that one premature baby than on the remaining eight babies combined.

**Resources for your business**

With 1.7 million women in the workforce having a baby each year, there is much that you can do to help moms and moms-to-be — and to increase your profitability. The March of Dimes offers a no-cost, multidimensional worksite wellness program, Healthy Babies

Healthy Business®, that is tailored to the needs of your company, provides health information for employees, and promotes a pregnancy- and family-friendly work environment. For more information, visit marchofdimes.com/hbbh.