WEST VIRGINIA

National data-driven objectives from Healthy People 2030\(^1\) were set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with the goal of improving health and well-being over the next decade. Several HP 2030 objectives are specific to the prevention of pregnancy complications and maternal death and improvements to women’s health before, during and after pregnancy.

The graphs below show where West Virginia falls for each selected objective, including preterm birth, infant mortality, unhealthy weight before pregnancy and low-risk Cesarean birth. A star is displayed on the right of each individual component if the state has met the objective.

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**OBJECTIVE** | **HP TARGET**
---|---
Preterm birth | Less than 9.4 preterm births per 100 live births
Infant mortality | Less than 5.0 infant deaths per 1000 live births
Unhealthy weight before pregnancy* | Less than 52.9% of women will have an unhealthy weight before pregnancy
Low-risk Cesarean birth | Less than 23.6% of low-risk women have Cesarean deliveries

* HP 2030 objective measures “healthy weight before pregnancy”; unhealthy weight was used to better align with other measures.

Preterm birth is a birth with less than 37 completed weeks of gestation, based on obstetric estimate of gestational age. Infant mortality is death of an infant before 1 year of age. Low-risk Cesarean birth is a Cesarean birth when the baby is a single infant, positioned head-first, the mother is full-term (at least 37 weeks), and has not given birth prior. Unhealthy weight before pregnancy is a body mass index less than 18.5 or 30 and above.

**Source:** Department of Health and Human Services. [https://health.gov/healthypeople](https://health.gov/healthypeople). Preterm birth, unhealthy weight before pregnancy and low-risk Cesarean birth are from the National Center for Health Statistics, 2021 final natality data. Infant mortality is from the National Center for Health Statistics 2020 linked infant birth and death file.
SELECTED OUTCOMES IN WEST VIRGINIA:
PRETERM BIRTH AND CLINICAL MEASURES

Many structural, systemic and environmental factors influence the health of mothers and babies, especially for Black, Native American and Hispanic people. This page describes preterm birth by geographical location and other clinical measures by maternal race and ethnicity in West Virginia using detailed race and ethnicity categories. By first understanding where differences exist, we can then move forward to advocate for changes towards health equity.

**PRETERM BIRTH RATES BY COUNTIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>PRETERM BIRTH RATE</th>
<th>CHANGE IN RATE FROM LAST YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berkeley</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>Improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabell</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>Improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>Improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanawha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>Worsened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monongalia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>Worsened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>Worsened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INFANT MORTALITY RATE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Per 1000 Live Births

- Black: 13.7%
- White: 6.5%

**LOW-RISK CESAREAN BIRTH BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Percent

- American Indian/Alaska Native: 50.0%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 32.0%
- Black: 30.1%
- White: 26.5%
- Hispanic: 26.4%

**INADEQUATE PRENATAL CARE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Percent of Live Births

- American Indian/Alaska Native: 22.7%
- Black: 19.8%
- Hispanic: 19.6%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 14.2%
- White: 14.2%
This data fact sheet describes the nuances of the racial and ethnic makeup of mothers in West Virginia using detailed race and ethnicity categories. Information for live births and preterm births is presented to highlight groups who account for large proportions of live births and also experience an increased risk of premature birth.

### LIVE BIRTHS

**Percentage of Live Births by Mother’s Race and Ethnicity**

- **White**: 91.0%
- **Black**: 3.2%
- **Other Hispanic**: 2.4%
- **More than one race**: 2.2%
- **Other Asian**: 1.1%
- **American Indian/Alaska Native**: 0.1%
- **Other Pacific Islander**: 0.0%

- **91.0% of births were to White mothers**
- **91.0% of all live births were to White mothers**
- **Black had the highest preterm birth rate**
- **1 in 8 babies were born too soon**

### PRETERM BIRTHS

**Percentage of Live Births Born Preterm by Mother’s Race and Ethnicity**

- **Black**: 18.1%
- **Other Hispanic**: 15.9%
- **White**: 12.3%
- **More than one race**: 11.7%

- **2,202 babies were born preterm in 2021.**
- **Black had the highest preterm birth rate between the years 2019-2021.**
- **1 in 8 babies were born too soon.**
March of Dimes leads the fight for the health of all moms and babies, no matter who they are, where they live or what they can afford. We’re advocating for policies to protect them. We’re working to improve the health care they receive. We’re pioneering research to find solutions. We’re supporting families with programs, knowledge and tools to have healthy pregnancies. By uniting communities, we’re helping families everywhere get the support and care they need and donors from around the world champion our work.

Anyone who wants to join in the fight for the health of all birthing people, babies and their families can support our Office of Government Affairs by becoming an advocate. Advocates advance our efforts through supporting our work to influence legislation, policy and regulation at the federal and state level. From extending postpartum Medicaid coverage in states across the country, to passing protections for pregnant workers to establishing Maternal Mental Health Advisory Committees, March of Dimes’ advocate efforts are making an impact.

Our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Initiatives empower, educate and support families through evidence-based programs and a variety of both online and in person resources. We provide support to families while babies are in the NICU and during their transition home. Our programs work with hospitals, NICUs and families in order to improve the NICU patient and family experience. In West Virginia, March of Dimes partners with Charleston Area Medical Center-Women and Children’s Hospital to carry out this work.

March of Dimes funds and supports research grants for translational and actionable projects across the country that lead directly to interventions or prevention for mom and baby health. The research goal is to turn observations in the laboratory, clinic and community into interventions, therapeutics and devices that improve the health of moms and babies with an eye towards characterizing disparities in key research areas. Our current research focuses on late, spontaneous preterm birth, racial inequities as they relate to morbidity and mortality outcomes for mothers and babies, cardiovascular health conditions developed or exacerbated during pregnancy and maternal stress, its impact on pregnancy outcomes and how to mitigate the effects.

THE MARCH OF DIMES REPORT CARD: STARK AND UNACCEPTABLE DISPARITIES PERSIST ALONGSIDE A TROUBLING RISE IN PRETERM BIRTH RATES
March of Dimes recommends state policy actions that are rooted in addressing disparities in maternal and infant health outcomes, see www.marchofdimes.org/reportcard
For details on data sources and calculations, see Technical Notes: https://bit.ly/ReportCardTechnicalNotes
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