



gapps

an initiative of Seattle Children's

GLOBAL ALLIANCE TO PREVENT  
PREMATURITY AND STILLBIRTH

## Preterm Birth & Stillbirth in Washington State

- Washington's preterm birth rate has increased by about a third in the last decade
- Nearly 10,000 preterm babies are born each year in Washington state
- Stillbirths devastate hundreds of Washington families each year

### Local and Global Challenges

One out of every nine babies born in Washington will be preterm—born before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy. Those who survive have increased risks for life-threatening infections, cerebral palsy, brain injury, and respiratory, vision, hearing, learning and developmental problems.

Costs related to prematurity in this state exceeded \$400 million in 2005 for medical care, delivery, and lost labor and productivity. The government, businesses, communities and families share this economic burden.

About 25,000 are stillborn in the United States each year, dying in the womb after 20 weeks or during delivery. These late fetal losses are ten times more common than Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Globally, an estimated 13 million babies are born preterm. A staggering 3.2 million stillbirths occur each year worldwide. For international comparison a stillbirth occurs after 28 completed weeks of pregnancy.

All families experience immeasurable suffering.

### U.S. Health Goals 2010

Healthy People 2010 establishes national goals to reduce preterm births to no more than 7.6% of all live births. Yet, in Washington state, preterm births make up 11% of all live-births in the state. To meet these goals, Washington state has implemented smoking cessation programs and expanded preconception and prenatal care for low-income women. However, more must be done to reach these goals.

### Disparities Persist

Washington's average rates of preterm birth vary by race and ethnicity: Native Americans (14.8%), blacks (13.4%), whites and Asians (10.4%). The causes of preterm birth and stillbirth differ by genetics, environment and gestational age.

Black infants born preterm are nearly twice as likely to die as white or Hispanic infants. In addition, black women have the highest stillbirth rate and are nearly twice as likely to have a stillbirth compared with Hispanic, Asian, Native American or white women.

We urgently need more research to understand causes and identify proven innovations.

### About GAPPS, an initiative of Seattle Children's

Seattle Children's launched the Global Alliance to Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth (GAPPS) to address these challenges. Our mission is to lead a collaborative, global effort to increase awareness and accelerate innovative research and interventions that will improve maternal, newborn and child health outcomes.

