



Maternal Morbidity and Mortality

Maternal morbidity is the physical and psychological conditions that results from or are aggravated by pregnancy and have an adverse effect on a woman's health.

Maternal mortality is defined as the death of a woman while pregnant or within one year of the end of pregnancy from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy.

Why is this Needed?

In Kansas, the maternal mortality rate is 19.6 per 100,000 live births while the national average is 19.9 per 100,000 live births. The major causes of pregnancy-related deaths are the same today as in the past: bleeding, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, embolism, and infection. Chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity contribute to these causes and are preventable.

Maternal morbidity and mortality is a major public health concern and has significant family, economic, and societal impacts. Maternal mortality should be part of each state's core public health function of assessment. State maternal mortality review committees make important contributions to public health and improvements to healthcare systems.

The Importance of a Review Committee

In 1986, the CDC initiated a national Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System because more clinical information was needed to fill data gaps about causes of maternal deaths. Soon after, states began forming maternal mortality review committees understanding the benefits to lower maternal deaths.

State maternal mortality review committees make important contributions to public health by improved data collection and surveillance. An active maternal mortality review committee provides valuable data and information that will identify risks and causes of maternal morbidity and mortality so that through effective interventions, future preventable maternal deaths can be reduced.

The March of Dimes supports HB 2573 that would provide the study and investigation of maternal deaths by the secretary of health and environment. We believe this would effectively decrease the number of maternal deaths and increase the number of healthier pregnancies in Kansas.

Key Points

- According to the CDC, the trend of maternal mortality is on the rise: 7.2 per 100,000 live births (1987) to 19.9 (CDC, 2011-2014)
- Kansas ranks 27th in the nation with 19.6 deaths per 100,000 live births
- Chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity contribute and are preventable
- Despite the rising trend, states with a review committee make important contributions to public health and improvements to healthcare
- According to ACOG, 30 states in the US have a maternal mortality review committee
- Maternal mortality review committees provide valuable data and interventions to reduce future maternal deaths

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