



Make healthy babies a priority.

Support LB 599 and restore prenatal care for all Nebraska babies.

When Prenatal Care is Denied, Nebraska Babies Pay the Price

Prenatal care can mean the difference between life and death. A study in South Dakota found that babies who did not receive prenatal care were six times more likely to die within the first year of life. Nationally, infant mortality rates are also six times higher among babies who received prenatal care late or not at all when compared with those whose care started in the first trimester (South Dakota Dept. of Health, 2007; US Dept. of Health & Human Services, 2006).

A lack of prenatal care also increases the risk of being born premature or at a low weight. Babies born too small (defined as less than 5.5 lbs) or too soon are more likely to experience: mental and behavioral disabilities, chronic respiratory problems, deafness, blindness, and cerebral palsy (Cureva, et al, in American Journal of Nursing, 2005).

Despite declines in the 1970's and 1980's, the rate of low birth weights have been on the rise in Nebraska and nationally since 1990 (Nebraska Vital Statistics).

Prenatal Care Makes a Difference for a Lifetime

Problems at birth can follow a child through their lifetime. One study shows that babies born at extremely low birth weight are more likely to have lower IQ and academic scores, experience greater difficulties at school and require more educational assistance than kids born full term. Half of the children in the study needed special education or repeated a grade. (Shore & Shore, Preventing Low-birth Weight, 2009; Saroj et al in Pediatrics, 2003).

A low birth weight or premature infant is up to 3 times more likely to fail standardized tests by the time they reach 1st grade. (Williams, Prematurity and Academic Achievement, presentation for Kids Count Report)

Healthy Babies are Worth the Investment

Ensuring babies are born healthy makes good financial sense. Numerous studies have documented the economic cost of unhealthy babies and moms:

1. Costs for a complicated birth range from \$20,000 to \$400,000 compared to an average cost of \$6,400 for a "normal" delivery. (March of Dimes Perinatal Data Center)
2. Babies born too small can require increased hospital and provider resources, including time in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at a cost ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per day. A severely ill newborn can spend several weeks to several months in the NICU. (March of Dimes)
3. Costs associated with extremely preterm infants (born prior to 28 weeks) average \$65,600. (Pediatrics, 2007)
4. The CDC estimates a savings of \$14,755 per low birth weight prevented if all women received adequate prenatal care. (CDC, 1999)
5. A study in Missouri of over 12,000 Medicaid births found that every \$1 spent on prenatal care resulted in a savings of \$1.49 in newborn and post-partum costs up to 60 days after birth. (Schramm in Public Health Reports)
6. The Institute of Medicine found that \$1 spent on prenatal care for women at high risk of delivering a low birth weight baby could save \$3.38 in direct medical care expenditure. (Institute of Medicine)

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