

Program Description

The Black Infant Health (BIH) Program is designed to decrease the infant mortality rate within the African American community, and to improve the overall health status of the African American family in a cultural context. The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services works with five subcontractors to make BIH perinatal interventions and services available to the public.

Using a street-based outreach strategy, BIH community health outreach workers (CHOWs) identify eligible pregnant and parenting African American women 18 years of age and older to enroll in the program. Once enrolled in the BIH Prenatal Care Outreach intervention, clients receive home visits, referrals to family support services, one-on-one health education, and continuous encouragement and positive support. In addition, the clients have an opportunity to participate in Social Support and Empowerment, a classroom style intervention which consists of eight class sessions. This intervention incorporates skill building and peer support into each session, which enables participants to gain a heightened sense of self-esteem and self-awareness.

Important Things to Know

- African Americans have the highest rates of infant mortality compared to other racial/ethnic groups in Los Angeles County.
- African American infants in California are more than twice as likely to die during their first year of life compared to white infants.
- Although overall rates have decreased, African-American infants are still 2.5 times more likely to die of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) than White infants.
- African American women have the highest incidence of pre-term labor, low birth weight babies, and other pregnancy-related complications compared to women in other racial/ethnic groups.
- The BIH Program collaborates with community partners to implement strategies to improve infant health, such as increasing immunization and breastfeeding rates throughout African American communities.

For more information, please call (213) 639-6444 or (213) 639-6434 or visit <http://lapublichealth.org/mch> and click on Child and Adolescent Health Program.



