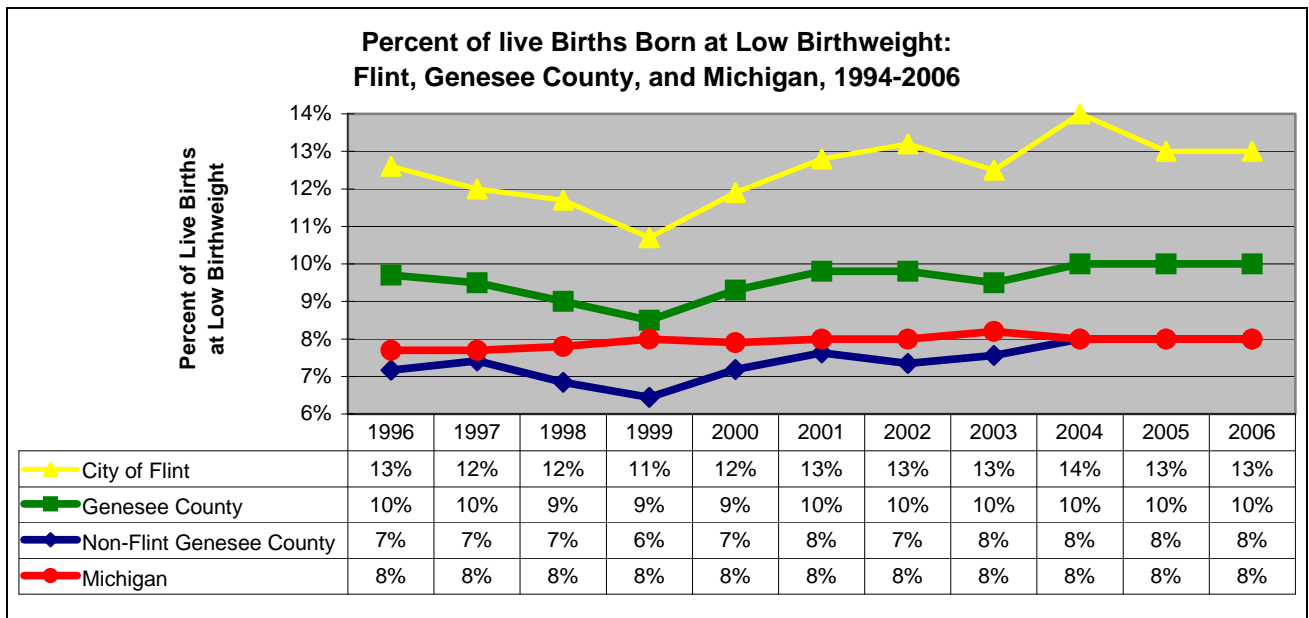


Fact Sheet 2.6 Low Birthweight

Low birthweight babies weigh less than 2,500 grams, or about 5.5 pounds. These babies are at higher risk of death and long-term illness or disability than are babies of normal birthweight. Some low birthweight babies are born prematurely, while others are small for their gestational age.



- The percentage of low birthweight births has increased in varying degrees in Michigan and in the depicted subdivisions over the past 10 years
- The percentage of low birthweight births in Michigan has increased only slightly over the past ten years, but it has increased more in Flint and Genesee County. The rate has also been relatively more variable in Flint and Genesee County.
- After declining to historic low rates in 1999, the percentage of low birthweight births in the city of Flint increased sharply to over 13% of all births in 2006.
- The percentage of low birthweight births to Genesee County women living outside the city of Flint has consistently been below the Michigan average.

BEYOND THE NUMBERS

There needs to be an increased awareness of the link and relationship between low birth weight, premature birth, and infant mortality. Neglecting one condition is to neglect all three; likewise, addressing one addresses all three. Thinking about these issues as a related set of factors affecting the health of children should lead to improved, increased, and/or enhanced measures for affecting and improving outcomes. And, in incidences where low birth weight does occur, families need access to interventions that might help reduce risk of infant death, illness, or disability, so that babies can “catch up” to full-term higher birth weight babies.

Fact Sheet 2.6: Low Birthweight continued...

EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTION EFFORTS

Premature births and low birthweight babies are focus areas for March of Dimes programs. This includes education and information about pre-term labor and delivery, and the care of these infants, as well as research into causes for the occurrences.

- **The Genesee Health Plan** - While not health insurance, this health coverage is supported by local, state, and federal funds. The plan is a limited health benefits program that includes doctor visits, prescriptions, lab tests and x-rays. Must be between 19-64 years of age to be eligible and the income requirement is 175% poverty level.
- **Healthy Start** - Coordinated by the Health Department, Healthy Start serves mothers and children 0-2 in the 48503, 48504, and 48458 zip codes. The providers assist with housing, food and nutrition, baby clothes, making and keeping doctor appointments, advice on infant bonding, and health care concerns.
- **Health Plans** - Provide prenatal services to their members.
- **Missing Links** - Committee of providers, particularly outreach, to aid in the coordination of services.
- **Friendly Access Infant Mortality Initiative (FAIMI)** - Led by the Greater Flint Health Coalition, this initiative assists in connecting pregnant women to services.
- **Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)** - Multi disciplinary committee reviews infant deaths with the aim of prevention.

Definitions: Babies who weigh less than 2,500 grams (approximately 5 lb. 8 oz.) at birth are considered low-birthweight.

Data Source: Michigan Department of Community Health, Vital Records and Health Data Development Section.

Note: These data are based on three-year averages, with the year given as the midpoint. Births by county and city are based on the mother's residence.

Revised: 11/26/07

<http://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/chi/births/frame.html>